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**Faculty of Behavioral, Management and  
Social Sciences**

## **Innovative work behavior through access to resources and LMX – Case study at a German retailer**

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# ABSTRACT

**Purpose** – To identify the leader-member relationship as well as the access to resources based on the Resource Mobilization Theory that influences Innovative Work Behavior. Given that innovation is not very likely in the retail industry and especially not on the shop floor, this study wants to explore the existing limitations and give indications what changes are needed to work more towards innovative work behavior.

**Research Design/Methodology/ Approach** – Data is obtained from 12 Interviews in a German retail company, unstructured and semi-structured at four different hierarchical levels: HR manager, Store manager, line manager and shop floor employees. These were analyzed using Atlas.ti and a coding scheme to be able to state propositions regarding the underlying theories.

**Findings** – There is nearly no innovative work behavior possible based on the exchange of leader and employees. Further, no relevant resources are available nor can any be mobilized. This stems from the overall organizational strategy, the missing innovation focus and the uneducated personnel. Only the social structure within the employees is innovation enabling and does foster some knowledge exchange.

**Practical Implications** – Managers need to delegate more tasks to their employees and establish a two-way communication. The relation between leader and employee should become more mutually beneficial and delegation and trust should be more emphasized, to shift from low to a high-quality relationship. This will help the employees to receive more resources and to be more intrinsically motivated to come up with innovations. Also, the overall number and variety of resources such as information, time and knowledge need to become greater, to be able to engage in innovative activities.

**Value** – This case study gives new insights to the very limited literature regarding innovation in the retail sector and validates the theoretical leadership structures and relationships in the retail industry. Furthermore, the resource mobilization theory is applied in and fitted to the business context with an interaction of the leader-member exchange theory.

## Keywords

**Innovative Work Behavior, individual innovation, leadership, LMX, transformational, resource mobilization theory, food retail industry, resource access**

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# 1 Management summary

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This research focuses on the influence of Leader-member Exchange (LMX) and the Access to resources on Innovative work behavior (IWB) of shop floor employees based on the Resource Mobilization Theory (RMT) in the retail sector. IWB is described as the intentional creation of novel ideas, innovations, and improvement which includes process improvements, new product ideas, new ways of doing things and increasing the effectiveness and success of organizational processes. This is argued to help firms sustain their competitive advantage and is a determining factor for success.

Scholars studying innovation and leadership within the retail sector indicated that IWB is likely to be restrained by several factors and innovativeness is lower than in other industries. Several other factors contribute to the fact that employee initiatives to innovate are prohibited, indicating that within the retail industry innovations are easily copied, they focus on economies of scale and cost leadership strategies and no real “new” innovations could be observed. Previous studies indicated that a lack of leadership is inherent with few opportunities for employees to go beyond their job description. The goal of this study was to outline the current situation within a leading retail chain in Germany and to investigate the influence that the relationship between LMX and access to resources have on IWB.

In order to do this, a case study was conducted consisting of document analysis, employee interviews, and observations in a store. This market was representative for its size, the number of employees and the current level of development of organizational practices. First, within the document analysis, different documents concerning the overall leadership philosophy, the team culture, the available resources and Idea management were checked and analyzed. Second, the interviews were held with HR managers, shop floor employees, and line managers.

The different data collections methods provided a comprehensive understanding of the current situation and how employees are influenced by the relation to their supervisor and the granted resources towards IWB. The identified resources that were available to employees are limited to moral and socio-organizational resources, whereas they support each other and are well connected with the departments. Others were missing or not accessible for the employees. But moreover, the influence of the leader-member relationship has on IWB was more insightful. A lot of employees with a low-quality relationship lost motivation to behave innovatively and to generate ideas, whereas employees with a high-quality relationship were in a frequent exchange with their leader about ideas. Still, further steps were inhibited by missing hierarchical and cultural

structures. Some employees also made negative experiences with their ideas and see the culture themselves as not participative.

This study offers multiple implications for managers in the retail industry. Firstly, this study offers insights into the relationship between employees and what consequences a negative relationship can have on their innovation performance as well as their ideas concerning existing processes. More focus should be placed on the leader-member exchange and that this relationship is intact. The leader often did not place emphasis on a two-way communication and some do not delegate tasks nor responsibilities. A low-quality relationship has the effect that employees do not have the motivation and opportunity to use existing resources because the leader does not support them, there is no mutual trust and two-way communication is not facilitated. This also cannot positively moderate the relationship between RMT and IWB. Secondly, the study showed that the access to resources is very limited, maybe too limited and that sources that are theoretically available cannot be used. This is either because of high time pressure and no convenient way to look for them or the missing knowledge i.e. to handle a computer to access the intranet. Employees need less time pressure, more information about their processes and the possibility to exchange knowledge with other employees from the industry. But, coming back to LMX, the employees need to be motivated by managers to use these resources, what moderates the relationship to the extent that if employees are not motivated to use resources they cannot engage in IWB. This shows the interaction between leadership and resources because this lack of motivation could also be observed with some of the interviewees. It is advised that more studies are conducted in the retail industry and differences between organizational strategies are outlined. This could help to generally understand the focus on innovation or the absence of it.

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### 3 Introduction

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In today's organizational world, the concept of innovation is well understood and the emphasis is placed on continuously introducing novelty and change to organizations, it is even argued that it is crucial for the organization's long-term performance. By providing valuable insights into the future of the organizational environment, innovations can help organizations to stay ahead of their competition (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010; McGrath, Tsai, Venkataraman, & MacMillan, 1996). The grocery retail business in Germany is one of the most competitive ones in the market right now, with a 14% increase in market turnover over the past 5 years, they are constantly striving to outperform each other (Gassmann, 2017; Ogbonna & Whipp, 1999). The food retail industry, not only in Germany, can be described as an oligopolistic one (Anders, 2008), where competition on prices is growing in whole Europe, which is achieved by differentiation and innovation (Colla, 2004). Not only other stationary retailers but the growing number of the online retailer, also in the food sector, makes it more important than ever for "offline" retailer to stay competitive by innovations. Nitt-Drießelmann (2013) sees a stagnating income of the people and reduced inhabitants until 2030, where the potential to generate continuous sales and a stable number of customers must come from innovations and new revenue streams.

Until now, innovation and the successful management have been studied on the level of organizations, leadership, work groups, and individuals. This research will be looking at the individual innovation, innovation driven by employees. For over half a century scientist are looking at innovation and how processes can be improved, but not with the underlying need to innovate in order to survive. Today, where everyone strives for efficiency and has limited resources, it is more important than ever to exploit the resources they already possess – the employee's knowledge and creativity (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010; Høyrup, 2012). But for them to generate ideas and come up with innovations, they need to be managed towards this and behave differently than usual. (Høyrup, 2010); Reynolds and Hristov (2009) define the innovations that stem from employees as non-technical and non- R&D innovations.

Innovative work behavior (IWB) of employees is described as the development and creation of novel and useful ideas introduced to a department, workgroup or job role. It aims for improving existing processes with the aim to increase productivity and efficiency (Ramamoorthy, Flood, Slattery, & Sardesai, 2005). The idea itself does not need to be completely new, but it can be an innovation if it is new to the organization (De Spiegelaere, Van Gyes, & Van Hootegeem, 2016; Janssen, 2000). The production but also the consumption of a new idea is with the individual employee, what makes the employee's actions, behavior and skills particularly important. This kind of IWB is a broad concept and



consists of three steps (Janssen, 2000; Scott & Bruce, 1994; Veenendaal & Bondarouk, 2015) namely idea generation, idea development and idea implementation. In the field of innovative work behavior, a lot of emphases is put on the manufacturing and knowledge-intensive sector, but nearly nothing can be found regarding the retail industry, where especially the innovation can be two-fold, consisting of top-down and bottom-up processes (Sundbo, 2000). Furthermore, the industry has less developed employees and cannot easily acquire knowledge, but there might be other resources that make innovation possible.

Innovation in the form of bottom-up innovation is initiated by the shop floor employee, where research is still in its beginnings, as it is a new approach to the mostly top-down approach of innovation, where the management initiates innovation (Kesting & Parm Ulhøi, 2010). As the opportunity for employees to innovate crucially depends on their access to resources and their ability to mobilize these (Damanpour, Walker, & Avellaneda, 2009), the Resource Mobilization theory (RMT) will be used to gain a sophisticated understanding of their importance and which resources need to be considered (Edwards & Gillham, 2013). Its inherent closeness with organizational dynamics, leadership and effectiveness criteria constitutes best with the organizational- entrepreneurial model (Canel, 1997).

On the one hand Leadership is a resource and to be an important antecedent for innovation (Mumford, Scott, Gaddis, & Strange, 2002) but on the other hand crucial for employees access to other organizational resources (Reuvers, Van Engen, Vinkenburg, & Wilson-Evered, 2008), especially in a formalized environment (Göran Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991), to exploit the own capabilities and make effective use of them (Loewe & Dominiquini, 2006). Also with IWB and RMT the employee level and organizational level is covered, but the managerial level in between is not considered. Here the relationship between employee and manager will be in the focus in form of the leader- leader-member exchange theory (LMX). A lot of resources might exist, but in order mobilize them and to motivate employees to use them, this needs to be considered as well (Reuvers et al., 2008). So, the influence of leadership directly on IWB as well as the moderation of the relationship between Resources and IWB will be investigated. The moderation is about giving employees the opportunity to use the resources and the direct influence will be about the motivation of the employees to engage in IWB.

The retail sector is special here because other than most innovation literature it is not a knowledge intensive industry but rather labor intensive, which implies that knowledge, skills and abilities are limited. Especially in the retail sector under intense competition and a fast changing market, innovations are primarily important (Damanpour et al., 2009; Nitt-Drießelmann, 2013). The retail sector is among the less innovative sectors, where the main

focus is on internationalization and market selection (Fernie, Alexander, & Doherty, 2010) and the literature lacks information regarding innovation and how they evolve. What is known is that mostly on-the-job and process innovations can be found (Pantano, 2014; Trigo, 2013), and interestingly one main barrier identified to innovation is the hierarchical structure including leadership (Reynolds & Hristov, 2009). There is the rumor that the retail industry is among the less innovative sectors compared to knowledge-intensive or engineering sectors (Miles, 2008; Oke, 2004). This might be correct in common sense, but looking to the UK, the retailer Tesco is amongst others in UK's R&D list of innovative organizations, one of the leaders (Reynolds & Hristov, 2009). They observe that the innovations simply differ in their nature compared to the ones in other sectors and therefore they are not mentioned.

Nowadays a lot of organizations are highly standardized, rules and regulations determine the work processes, which is a barrier to innovation, especially in the retail industry (Göran Ekvall & Arvonen, 1991). Whereas, they have advantages due to their size and access to more information and resources, but this industry suffers from a low level of education when looking at the individual level. The focus will be on how the employees are able to develop ideas to renew their routines and improved processes to improve the business 'performance. It should become clear how they can behave like this depending on the access to resources and how their supervisor influences this access.

The goal of this study is, therefore, to outline if resources are limited in such an environment, IWB is possible based on them and how the relation between employees and their leader influence this behavior.

To make a connection, consider the situation you have an idea and cannot promote it throughout the organization, because of a lack of socio-political connections and ignorance of your supervisor, a lot of innovations simply fail by this behavior and cannot be pursued (Yuan & Woodman, 2010).

To analyze this construct in the given context, the research question can be defined as follows:

***“What resources are available to employees to engage in IWB and how does LMX influence this relation and IWB within the retail sector?”***

## 3 Literature Review

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### 3.1 Employee-driven innovation in the retail sector

Innovation can generally occur at four levels: individual, group, organizational and on the sociocultural level (West & Altink, 1996). Employees can either be strategic in top management, administrative as manager or operational on the shop floor (Hartman, Tower, & Seбора, 1994). Each level is affected by the organization's structure and those organizations that are successful, involve every employee in their process for innovation (Ong, Wan, & Chng, 2003). Innovation, especially individual innovation, can be defined as the process involving the generation, adoption, implementation and embedding of new ideas, practices or workflows in an organization (Axtell et al., 2000). It is a process, where different organizational actors work together on a broader range in- and outside the organization (Swan, Newell, & Robertson, 1998). Here the concept of Employee-driven Innovation (EDI) is interesting for the innovation at the individual level, because it is initiated by the individual shop floor employee and not the management (Birkinshaw & Duke, 2013; Høyrup, 2010). It clearly should come from the bottom of an organization and make its way up to the top management. Still, here must be differentiated between different types and levels of EDI. The first order EDI, as Høyrup (2012) defines it, is innovation that really is initiated at the shop floor and also developed and implemented at this level. The second order EDI is innovation that is generated and developed on the shop floor but then streams upward to the top-management. Lastly, third-order EDI is initiated at the top-management and asks the employee to come up with the idea, this is more the form of a top-down approach and less EDI in the form of the bottom-up.

EDI is a form of a high-involvement innovation and rather a non-technological-innovation or a non-R&D-innovation (Høyrup, 2010). The innovation aiming at values and people management is named the "inner-directed" approach and does not put the focus on the competitiveness and the overall success. EDI happens outside the formal job description, but inside the timeframe where the employees should perform their defined tasks. But, this kind of innovation does not evolve on its own by employees but is the outcome of sharing a specific climate, culture, and resources (Smith, Ulhøi, & Kesting, 2012; Wang & Noe, 2010). EDI focuses on innovation that comes from the shop-floor and the individual employee, where IWB is an approach that also aims at the individual employees but additionally describes the phases how employees engage in innovation activities.

Often, innovation gets compared to creativity (Jafri, 2010), whereas it is only the basis for EDI and IWB (Napier & Nilsson, 2006). The focus here should clearly be not only on the generation of ideas but also the implementation, but these stages will be more defined in a

later section. Innovation is an intentional event, aiming at benefits from change, whereas these need to be understood rather broad than focused only on economic benefits. West and Altink (1996) name individual growth, increased work satisfaction, better interpersonal communication, better teamwork and increased productivity as other benefits and that it is based on two psychological needs, namely the motivation to explore and manipulate their environment by very creative means and the fear of threat and the need for psychological safety. When employees feel “too safe” and their routine is well embedded, they are likely to take risks and try out new ways of performing tasks. Especially in jobs, where they feel intrinsically motivated (Amabile, 1983), and when the performed tasks are understood as meaningful, employees are even more likely to show innovative behavior.

Innovations in the service sector, especially in the food retail business, are mostly on-the-job and process innovations. They are more incremental than radical solutions to new opportunities (Oke, 2004).

Still, there are barriers, where Reynolds and Hristov (2009) define that it is especially difficult to encourage employees to take risks and innovation in such hard business conditions. A further related aspect of these conditions is the financial uncertainty that results from the innovation process, looked at from the organizational view, but also the personal. People tend to worry more and more about their jobs and their financial security, given their already low-income level. Often the retail industry defines clear routines as well as financial and strategic goals, what suppresses innovation, but is needed to compete in the market (Nelson & Sidney, 2005). That implies that fewer workers are employed to have lower costs, who still have to do the same amount of work at the same time, which often results in psychological and physical stress (Wetzels, De Ruyter, & Bloemer, 2000). This decreases their commitment and performance (Behrman & Perreault Jr, 1984; Jackson & Schuler, 1985). The commitment is also influenced by their type of contract, a lot of people only work part-time. This is also a good example for the human capital structure. The employees are often not well-educated and to this comes the fact, working hours in the retail sector differ from 9 to 5 jobs and in recent developments, these distances tend to grow even larger (Deery & Mahony, 1994). Whereas other innovative industries have a high-level human capital, the retail industry is characterized by a low-level human capital, also because it is more labor and less knowledge intensive (Cooper, Gimeno-Gascon, & Woo, 1994). Another factor mentioned is that it is rather easy for competitors in the retail industry to copy certain innovations and constantly look at what the competition introduces. In the UK, it was found that the barriers of costs and financial impact do not have the biggest influence, but the lack of leadership and project management skills. Furthermore, the relatively low-educated & -skilled personnel is another aspect that needs to be considered.

Since the decision to adopt an idea usually influences the whole organization, it is taken within the headquarter. Moreover, these ideas occasionally can be spread into the markets quite easier from this point of origin. In such environments, systematic innovations are more likely to occur due to the number of involved stakeholders (Chesbrough & Teece, 2002). These innovations are often rather hard to secure from copying, this more likely to be found with product innovation, which can be an opportunity on the one hand to “copy” from competitors, but on the other hand also a burden when a certain idea can grow to a unique selling point (Fritsch & Meschede, 2001). In the following section, the different theoretical concepts are introduced and their influence on innovative work behavior is explained.

### 3.2 Innovative Work Behavior (IWB)

Almost over 50 years ago, scientific research of innovative organizational behavior was in its beginnings. From then on it has gained increasing attention (Katz, 1964). An organization can possess a wide range of resources to innovate and to create value, but necessary for using and exploiting these are employees and their work behavior (Akram, Lei, Haider, & Akram, 2017). In this research, the behavior towards individual innovation is the focus and was initially referred to by Kanter (1988); Van de Ven (1986).

When employees generate ideas and innovation, they challenge existing systems and daily routines (Ford, 1996; Janssen, 2005). For an organization to get their employees to behave innovatively, they need to build a climate and surrounding that enables innovation and motivates employees to work beyond their formal expectations. A behavior that can arise from such a culture than is Innovative Work Behavior (IWB), which can be described as the

*“intentional creation, introduction and application of new ideas within a work role group or organization, in order to benefit role performance, the group, or the organization.”*  
(Janssen, 2000, p. 288)

or as De Jong and Den Hartog (2010, p. 24) define

*“an individual's behavior that aims to achieve the initiation and intentional introduction (within a work role, group or organization) of new and useful ideas, processes, products or procedures. IWB differs from employee creativity – the production of new and useful ideas concerning products, services, processes and procedures (Amabile, 1988) – because it also includes the implementation of ideas.”*

It's aimed at the innovation at an individual level and self-initiated behavior (Imran, Saeed, Anis-UI-Haq, & Fatima, 2010), where it can be viewed as a broader behavioral construct,

because it not only describes the process from idea generation to implementation but also the associated socio-political activities to transform the theory into reality (Devloo, Anseel, De Beuckelaer, & Salanova, 2015). By innovative work behavior, it is likely that set of tasks are changed, job roles or informal norms need adaptation (Janssen, 2003). Here innovative work behavior also needs to be differentiated from creativity, as it is not only about the generation of new ideas but also about the follow-up steps. This does not limit IWB only to novel ideas, but also adopting others' ideas that are new to one's organization (Yuan & Woodman, 2010; Zaltman, Duncan, & Holbek, 1973). Individuals need to show intrinsic motivation as well as enthusiasm to perform innovative work, especially when they are not assigned to do this work. IWB is an iterative process and different researcher formulates a different number of stages of this process. De Jong and Den Hartog (2010); Dorenbosch, Engen, and Verhagen (2005) formulate four stages namely problem recognition, idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization, whereas Devloo et al. (2015); Janssen (2000); Scott and Bruce (1994) only formulate three: idea generation, promotion, and realization.

Here the three-stage model from Scott and Bruce (1994) (see Tab. 1) is applied since their focus was on small-scale on-the-job innovations, which is a good fit in the given research context: idea generation, idea promotion and idea realization. Another reason is that the stages can be clearly distinguished from each other and when looking at the empirical analysis of the study from De Jong and Den Hartog (2010, p. 31), there is weak support for their four stages "However, evidence of the distinctiveness of the four dimensions was weak." The same missing evidence likewise in Kleysen and Street (2001). The stages follow linearly each one another but can be looked at more like a repetitive model, where feedback between the stages could set one back to a previous stage (Dorenbosch et al., 2005).

## Three dimensions of IWB

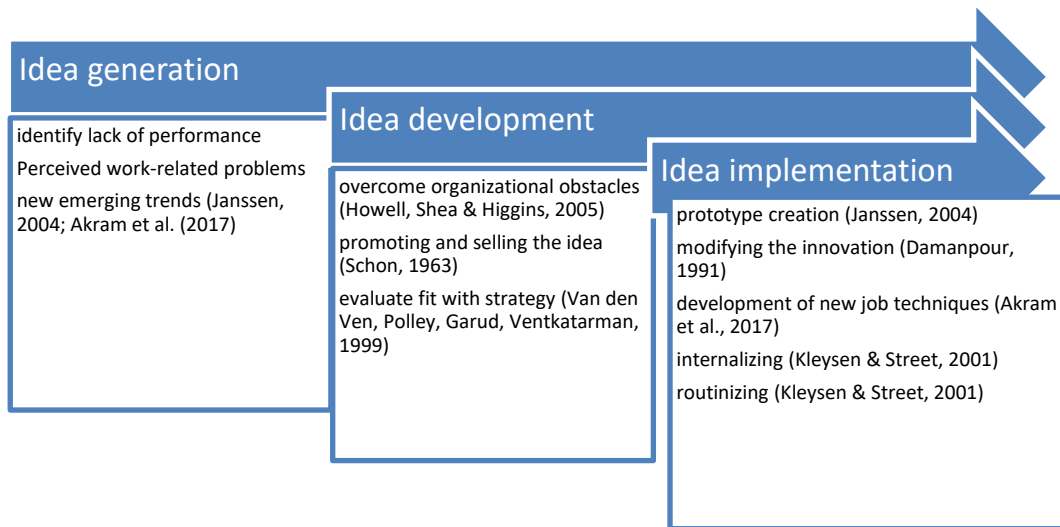


Table 1. Three stages of innovative work behavior based on Scott and Bruce (1994)

### 3.2.1 Idea generation

First, to engage in IWB, a problem or opportunity must arise that makes it favorable to react to give an example: In the food retail industry, a high number of goods must be handled and new ways of handling these might result in increased time-efficiency. As outlined before time pressure is a big issue and ways to overcome it will always be welcome by employees. Beginning from this step “idea generation” in the model of Scott and Bruce (1994) is about the ideas that might relate to improved processes, products or improved customer experience (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). Damanpour and Schneider (2006) describe this stage consisting of recognizing a certain need or problem, as well as an innovation that might be considered of value for the organization. The unique combination here might lie in the mixture of reorganization and new information on existing and used concepts to perform the job (Dorenbosch et al., 2005). Akram et al. (2017) define this as the brainstorming phase, where employee shares their initial and undeveloped ideas. This can mean searching and discovering the lack of performance, listing different options or thinking about possible solutions. Janssen (2004) see the disclosure of work-related problems as well as new emerging trends as a driver for idea generation.

### 3.2.2 Idea development

In the model of Scott and Bruce (1994) the phase following the generation of a new idea is the development phase, or the championing of the idea, where the innovation needs to be advertised. Most of the time this means engaging in networking, socializing and finding

friends that can promote and back up the idea (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2010). At best, these people have some degree of autonomy and can make a decision or report to a superior employee (Janssen, 2000). Howell, Shea, and Higgins (2005); S. A. Shane (1994) see these people, so called “champions”, as organizational individuals who can overcome obstacles and can directly connect with superiors to promote and further deliver an idea (Davenport, 1999). Thereby, Schon (1963) state, champions use every informal sales and promotion opportunity to promote it. He even sees “champions” as pivotal to the success of an innovative idea. Furthermore, these people also have the ability to form and manage groups to support the development also across departments (Van de Ven, Polley, Garud, & Venkataraman, 1999) and to mobilize the needed resources (S. Shane, 1995). Here the access to resources for the further development is most important. Chakrabarti and Hauschildt (1989) state that champions distinguish themselves from others, in that they have a clear vision of what benefits the innovation will bring, enthusiasm about further development, high level of commitment and the ability to involve others. With this mindset, they also can evaluate ideas and their fit to the organizational strategy. Thus, idea development is accompanied by idea championing and makes sure the innovation is properly supported, resources are mobilized and different organizational actors are brought together.

### 3.2.3 Idea implementation

The last step of the innovation process, as defined by Scott and Bruce (1994) is the idea implementation or realization. Once the idea has been accepted and the benefits outweigh the costs, the idea needs proper implementation (Carmeli, Meitar, & Weisberg, 2006; Dorenbosch et al., 2005). Janssen (2004) argues for producing a prototype and a model, where the innovation can be realistically experienced and tested. The last stage is also used again for evaluating the idea and if a pilot phase showed weaknesses, it is possible based on the initial idea, to modify it (Damanpour, 1991). De Jong and Den Hartog (2008) go beyond the phase of testing and modeling the implementation, where it is about internalizing, routinizing (Kleysen & Street, 2001) and making it a part of the regular workflow. To successfully implement it, also new services and job techniques need to be established (Akram et al., 2017). Concluding, the last step of IWB is concerned with bringing the theoretical idea into reality and when needed to modify it to ensure a successful implementation.



### 3.3 Resources needed to engage in IWB

To be able to engage in innovative activities and further develop initial ideas, resources are a necessary mean and are found to be extremely related to creativity and idea generation (Goran Ekvall & Ryhammar, 1999). Especially time, information technology, social interactions and the influence of others are found to be key factors (Martins & Terblanche, 2003; Tuomi, 2002). In order to be able to understand the importance of resources and to determine what types of resources are crucial for innovative work behavior, the Resource Mobilization theory is used as the essential framework for the following analysis. Initially, it was introduced in the 1970s with the aim of understanding the emerging and significant social movements and the efforts undertaken to realize these (Edwards & Gillham, 2013). Back then most of the work was directed towards the social movements (SMs) which were aimed at changing the social structure and the reward distribution in general (Jenkins, 1983). Canel (1997, p. 3) describe this theory as a “purposive-model of social action”, which explains social movements on a strategic-tactical-instrument (resources) level.

#### Organizational-entrepreneurial approach

There are two main approaches, the “political-interactive” and the “organizational-entrepreneurial” approach. The political interactive model is concerned with pre-existing networks, political power, interest groups and analyzes horizontal links (Canel, 1997). For the purpose of studying IWB while especially concentrating on IWB, the study at hand focusses on the organizational-entrepreneurial model by McCarthy and Zald (1977a). Concerned with organizational dynamics, leadership and especially effective resource management (Canel, 1997) it provides the most appropriate fit. A movement and the participation in it can range from simply signing a petition over organizing a protest to sabotage in an extreme case (Klandermans, 1984). Signing a petition can mean in the context of IWB to actively engage in the idea development phase and organizing a protest could be compared to driving the process as a “champion” by actively engaging others and taking the necessary risks. Participation can be executed in various ways, part-time or full-time, sometimes lawyers and professionals offer their service and expertise free of charge. Also, a lot of today’s organizations have some capital to share for social action and contribute to SMs, mostly by monetary support (McCarthy & Zald, 1977b). When organizing an SM, the structure is needed, not only to manage the financial resources but further to mobilize supporters, transforming all kind of members of society into sympathizers, etc. all to reach the target - change. To make it less confusing instead of a social movement, in the following it is referred to as the innovation process as it is a movement of knowledge

and ideas between individuals, who also require several distinct resources (Nonaka, 2008). To understand the logic behind the theory it is important to understand the underlying structure. Edwards and Gillham (2013) outline, as a partial theory to overcome resource inequality, the following: the key in order to best support a “social movement” is Resource Access. Everything needs funding as well as internal and external support in order to be realized and so do these movements, McCarthy and Zald (1977a, p. 1216) name it the “aggregation of resources” to understand these movements, Jenkins (1983) see various kind of resources a necessary mean for engagement in any kind of conflict. Resources need to be collected for the purpose and that without carefully recognizing the crucial parts of involvement, also from outside, it can account for failure and success of a SM.

The process of innovation and IWB can be compared in this sense to a movement, where the success of it, is depending on access to the right resources and can fail if certain resources are not granted or natural barriers exist. Edwards and Gillham (2013) formulate types of mechanisms like self-production, which describes the resources acquired by a social movement itself. By introducing an idea, in the best case, they obtain resources, participants, and networks. The next is called Aggregation and describes the transformation of individual held resources into collectively held resources (Edwards & Gillham, 2013). That simply can be money, knowledge or social networks. The third is co-optation/ appropriation. This term describes the utilization of existing relationships with other organizations and the resources. This implies tacit, reverse understanding that the resources will be used in mutual ways. Fourth, comes the mechanism of patronage, simply describing the mostly external relationship with private individuals as well as institutions. This can be obtaining services from a consultant as well as cooperating with partners in the same industry. Nevertheless, Vega-Jurado, Gutiérrez-Gracia, and Fernández-de-Lucio (2009) find that it has no significant influence on process innovation and will therefore not be considered. After introducing these resource access mechanisms, it is, in relation to the concepts of innovative work behavior and leadership, important to focus on the different resource types as well. Resources are the central part of RMT and could be specified more in detail over the last decades. The five central resources are of moral, cultural, socio-organizational, human and material nature. These will be in the focus when investigating the IWB and each will be considered at different stages.

### 3.3.1 Human Resources

Human resources are the most important type of sources and the initial point of innovation, who are often hard to find with the required knowledge, skills, and abilities. Since the early 1980s studies exist which outlines the importance of specific human resource qualities and

their implications for the organization's competitive advantage (Barney & Wright, 1998; Wilson, Sin, & Conlon, 2010). Employees generate, develop, modify, react upon and realize ideas and innovations by making use of their competencies and their different backgrounds (Van de Ven, 1986). These competencies are employees knowledge, skills and abilities (Ulrich, Brockbank, Yeung, & Lake, 1995), where Scarbrough (2003) see the flow between knowledge and humans as “the” source for innovation. Looking at them, just as a single individual makes no difference between each other, looking at the profession, i.e. a shop floor worker with knowledge in the field of warehouse logistics would contribute more than a recently hired shop floor worker, who still must learn a lot. Amabile (1983) found in her study that employees’ knowledge can enrich the knowledge base from which others draw their information, i.e. when generating the idea for new opportunities to shelve products, there is a need for information regarding pallet sizes and how many hands lifts can carry. This might seem very random, but even this information can further nurture the establishment of new knowledge within the innovation process. Galunic and Rodan (1998) also see the knowledge existing next to each other as a chance to innovate when it is mixed. To internally mix the diverse knowledge and skills, social networks are needed which are emphasized in the following sections (Henderson & Cockburn, 1994). Moreover, employees participate in innovation projects by collaborating on bringing an idea forward, where especially leaders can act as mentors or just by assisting others in promoting their idea (Udwadia, 1990). Referring to social support and interactions, this is also achieved by the human capital which will be discussed in the next section. More in general, others can motivate others by acting as a role model.

### 3.3.2 Moral resources

IWB is especially a socio- political process, where the need to feel support and influence of others (Ashforth, 1989; Janssen, 2005) is a central component. Moral resources, as in the RMT, are therefore important because they include solidarity, legitimacy and any other kind of social support on the job. The social systems in an organization found their first appearance in the RMT as moral resources. Still, these systems also do exist in the organizational world (Stern & Reve, 1980) In contrast to cultural resources, moral resources are less accessible and more proprietary (Edwards & Gillham, 2013). If an employee raises an idea, though a colleague does not see the expected value in it, but still motivates his/her colleague and empowers his/her actions, it is a form of relational trust and social support (Janssen, 2005). Especially for the idea development phase; people, friends, backers and fellow employees who back their project are needed (Dougherty & Heller, 1994). Bryk and Schneider (1996) argue for relational trust to be found in

organizations and that it consists of mutual tacit agreements, which normally exists between two or more individuals. This trust is informal and no specific obligations and expectations are connected to it. It is hard to monitor this, but it plays an important role in interactions. So, the more secure they feel about the success and the connected image of themselves, the more likely they will communicate this idea.

But, this also can create conflicts. These arise because fellow employees might feel threatened by new tasks that confuse their work routine, they feel insecurity because they might get redundant or frustrated by initiating change (Jones, 2010; Leary & Kowalski, 1990). This leads to stress on the job, where Baruch-Feldman, Brondolo, Ben-Dayana, and Schwartz (2002) argue that employees who have more stress on the job and do not receive social support are less productive and are more likely to get ill instead of innovating. Though, in the literature no consensus is reached whether high-stress levels force employees to increase their performance and creativity (Keijsers, Schaufeli, Le Blanc, Zwerts, & Miranda, 1995) or if a moderate to low stress level increases performance (Anderson, 1976; Cohen, 1980), this is not considered. What is known is that if employees receive social support in their job, they show more commitment and reciprocation as well as in-role performance (Eisenberger, Armeli, Rexwinkel, Lynch, & Rhoades, 2001; Viswesvaran, Sanchez, & Fisher, 1999).

Next to social support, worker solidarity was found to be one of the crucial factors and still today, as Kuhlmann and Schumann (2001) found, it is more important than ever. In work groups, where a certain degree of autonomy and task-integrated teamwork is present, where the solidarity among employees was proven in terms of increased comradeship as well as democratic and strategies for problem-solving. Those group dynamics leading to behavior aimed at solving problems can especially be favored in the idea generation phase. Still, one limitation is that the whole principle of solidarity is based on reciprocity. So, if one decides not to take part in informal help and interactions, it is more likely that they won't receive solidarity from their fellow employees (Peter, 1993). Furthermore, employees can fall, in a worst-case scenario, into distrust with their colleagues, because they tried to behave innovatively and change existing procedures (Janssen, 2003). Relating this back to IWB, it can mean that moral resources, especially social support, and strong solidarity, can change the state of mind of employees by increasing their commitment and motivation for in-role performance and their behavior towards problem-solving (idea generation & development) but are not accessible to each employee when they are not a fully integrated part of the work group.

### 3.3.3 Cultural resources

These types of resources are more concerned with tools to realize the projects in form of workplace culture (Judge, Fryxell, & Dooley, 1997), expert knowledge, tactics and strategic help (Edwards and Gillham (2013). Judge et al. (1997) argue that a balance of autonomy, recognition and sociotechnical systems, where a workgroup/department can be seen as a system. Jenkins (1983) emphasizes here that strategy and tactics are important because due to poor choice of tactics, which might have achieved one goal but not another, an innovation process' failure can be settled. This can also be the case due to organizational influence and different desired goals and outcomes of a process. The professionals, capable of giving strategic and tactical advice, are very widespread but not always available to everyone, what limits their influence on the process of developing an idea. But, this can also occur in that supervisors and line managers provide process relevant resources like information or visual material. In the innovation process, this can mean that experts have the relevant information for evaluating and embedding new ideas, referring to the idea implementation stage (Davenport & Prusak, 1998). If employees are provided with information regarding the current strategy and vision, they can refer to the current situation and can identify discrepancies easily and potentially react with ideas. McCarthy and Zald (1977b) describe especially the media as one of the most important tools of movements because it can "spread the word", acquire new participants and make their movement be heard by not just the scene they are acting in. This can be in an organizational context the intranet or "Vorschlagswesen" to communicate and spread the idea in the context of an innovation process, but can also be used for above-mentioned information spreading. Ong et al. (2003) found in their study support for the relation between knowledge structure and individual innovation. For the innovation in an organization also the norms and values are interesting because culture provides individuals with a set of "tools" from which they can select resources to take strategic actions and affect the process (Rindova, Dalpiaz, & Ravasi, 2011). Chatman and Jehn (1994) found that culture, overall for the service sector, consists of seven attributes: innovation, respect for people, outcome orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, detail orientation and stability. There can be cultures that focus on personal relationships, where team orientation, respect for people and stability is more in focus, whereas in compliance with rules and regulations attributes like goal orientation is stressed (Herbig & Dunphy, 1998). The culture, embedded in the HR practices, to stimulate idea generation and innovation should entail risk-taking, participative behavior, creativity in managing tasks and responsibility spread over the workforce (Lau & Ngo, 2004; Ogbonna & Whipp, 1999). Booth and Hamer (2007) made the interesting observation in the UK's retail industry, that employees as they become familiar with the organizational culture, are more likely to leave the organization. This could mean, as soon

as they get to know the whole business environment they might seek for different jobs, which is not a strong point for the industry.

### 3.3.4 Material resources

These resources include all the tangible parts of the innovation process including financial resources, property, offices, tools, equipment, etc. Edwards and McCarthy (2004) emphasize here not to underestimate the importance of monetary resources. An innovation process incurs a lot of different actors and bills need to be paid to realize the innovation. As mentioned in the LMX part this is part of the resources that leader can offer their employees based on their position. Physical resources are facilities, equipment, and supplies. Information resources, which are often underestimated, are databases and documents. Often an innovation is connected to a piloting phase, where the organization can reduce risks and weight the benefits against costs before committing to it. Still, the costs can easily get up to millions of euros, just to experience that an idea for an improvement does not bring the anticipated benefits. Larger organizations, like the one under investigation, are more likely to possess more resources available for innovation (Hewitt-Dundas, 2006). The more actors involved, the higher the costs for personnel. Other costs that need to be considered when an innovation is adopted are adjustment costs, due to reduced sales during the restructuring and possible training efforts as well as increased wages, when employees perform additional tasks (Black & Lynch, 2004). When employees are granted extra time to work on the idea, additional employees need to be assigned to the regular tasks, which also incurs costs. These resources are more likely to be scarcely available to the shop floor employees (Galbraith, 1982).

### 3.3.5 Social-organizational resources

Lastly, these types of resources can occur in form of infrastructures comparable to public goods like roads, hospitals, etc. In this context, it is more the social infrastructure, the social network access as a resource, because that can be limited to insiders and denied to outsiders as well as the access to organizations and their abilities. Besides the fact that this view on the innovation process was the main perspective to view innovations, there are some harsh critics on this theory by stating that the theory fails to clarify and ground the resource concept, as well as misses the linkages between the different resources and mobilization processes and it does not refute other claims of sources for resources of innovation processes (Cress & Snow, 1996). But especially dense social networks can have a positive influence on innovation by increased tacit knowledge sharing, even in formalized and standardized environments (Arrow, 1974; Kogut & Zander, 1992; Nahapiet

& Ghoshal, 1998). Tacit knowledge is important for the innovation process, it is the knowledge embedded in humans' mind which can hardly be expressed or codified, but helps to recognize problems and identify actions or ideas that might solve these (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998). In the case of formalized organizations, employees that create interconnectivity among employees, so-called boundary spanners (Tushman & Scanlan, 1981), simply undergo the formal systems from which informal systems arise, which again ensure this knowledge sharing. A more limited critic and not directed towards general resource aggregation part, but more the participation in an SM is, as Klandermans (1984) state that researcher often fails to understand the motivation for someone to participate and underestimate the ideology and existing grievances. But also external resources matter in this fact as a source for innovation (Oerlemans, Meeus, & Boekema, 1998), as employees in retail also have a lot of direct contact with customers, suppliers, and other parties. If they have an idea and pitch it to some of those stakeholders, they have the chance to evaluate the viability of an idea or to modify it by their input.

Connecting this theory to the field of innovation, innovative work behavior and its elements are a sort of innovation movement and all the actors and participants play a different role with different backgrounds and functions. Especially, when coming up with an idea (idea generation) it is important to have resources readily available and to make use of them to further develop an idea and lastly to implement it.

All the above-mentioned literature and their interdependency are now comprehensively put together in a general framework. It is wise not to put together all of it because all the literature stems from other fields of research and therefore might not be appropriate in the retail sector. Innovations can greatly differ on several aspects, only those who are widely accepted will be used (Castellacci, 1998).

### 3.4 Leadership and LMX empowering employees to engage in IWB

As leader support and social support is a resource outlined before, leadership will be looked at more in detail in the following, because for employees to use most resources they need to be granted access to these. With resources and IWB, the organizational and employee level has been covered, but the managerial level is left out, which is responsible for granting access to resources. This is even more important, when human capital is rather low and not knowledge drives the innovation, but maybe the interaction and the mutual support. Employees need to be motivated to use resources like these and this is especially important if their intrinsic motivation is not high. The provision comes from the leader, especially for shop floor employees (Tordera & González-Romá, 2013) and to better understand the



interaction between leader and employees' access to resources, this relationship will be looked at more in detail.

Leaders have a vigorous influence on employees. They define and establish the work environment with a context, goals and arising problems. Specific leadership behavior and style help employees to engage in the process of IWB, where Parker (2000) emphasizes the fact that employees need to have a psychological change first, they need to think in terms of what is best for the organization. Not till a leader get every potential out of their employees, they are a "good" leader (De Vries, 1996). Especially, in jobs with a simplified job description, as in the retail industry, this can mean to shift from a "that's not my concern" mentality to a more responsible and proactive mentality – flexible role orientation. Furthermore, the employee needs to feel capable of behaving innovative and change-oriented, or said differently if they possess a good self-efficacy or self-leadership capabilities, they are more motivated to come up with innovations (Bandura, 1989; Stashevsky, Burke, Carmeli, Meitar, & Weisberg, 2006).

First, an introduction to leadership styles will be given, which is on the group level of analysis, whereas secondly the leader-member exchange theory (LMX) will be emphasized which looks at leadership and the relation between leader and employee on the individual-level of analysis.

### 3.4.1 Leadership styles

To empower employees and enable them to behave innovatively, certain leadership structures need to be considered and what they consist of. Looking at different leadership styles, transactional leadership is said to be a barrier to innovative behavior, nevertheless, it forms the basis of transformational leadership (Reuvers et al., 2008), which was found to be enhancing IWB (Basu & Green, 1997). In a transactional leadership, the leader clearly defines his/her expectations in terms of the role performance and strictly monitors if these expectations are met (Pieterse, Van Knippenberg, Schippers, & Stam, 2010). The employees function more like a tool to ultimately reach organizational goals and provide less freedom for task performance. Transformational leadership, the extension of the transactional style and is measured by the effect the leader has on his/her employees (Felfe, Tartler, & Liepmann, 2004). The most important characteristic of a transformational leader is, that one can influence employees by forming and addressing their underlying values, beliefs, and self-esteem (Kark, Shamir, & Chen, 2003; Reuvers et al., 2008). They act as role models for the subordinates and can motivate and inspire the ones around them



by providing an inspiring vision of the future (Elenkov, Judge, & Wright, 2005; Sluis, 2004). Yidong and Xinxin (2013) describe the traits of a transformational leader, or as they call it “ethical” leader, as consisting of honesty, altruism, integrity, and commitment. It is said to be a “positive addition” to the transactional leadership, where the employee is in constant exchange with the leader (LMX) and is given more autonomy, what will be addressed in the following section (Pieterse et al., 2010, p. 611). By a transformational leadership style, the employees can be more innovative, because they receive intellectual stimulations due to more delegation and the inspiration of the leader (Mhatre & Riggio, 2014; Weibler, 2016). Still, Pieterse et al. (2010) stress the fact that it is not enough that employees can be innovative, but they also have to feel able to be it which needs to be the first step and then they can work towards more innovation.

De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) show within a study among twelve managers, that a participative culture empowers employees to behave innovatively. Regardless of using a transformational leadership style that includes a participative culture or not, in both studies by Kark et al. (2003) and De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) the result (Kanter, 1988) was a more organization directed behavior and the employees were willing to go beyond the agreed performance outcomes (Bass, Avolio, & Pointon, 1990).

Still, different articles are contradicting regarding the direct influence of leadership on innovative work behavior. For example, Basu and Green (1997) find a positive relationship between leader support and commitment, but overall transformational leadership was significantly negative related to innovative work behavior. Whereas, Boerner, Eisenbeiss, and Griesser (2007); Howell and Avolio (1993); Reuvers et al. (2008); Yidong and Xinxin (2013) found a strong positive support for transformational leadership on follower performance and innovation. On one fact, they are all clear, and that is transactional leadership is not related to IWB. Still, the transformational and transactional leadership models aim at the group-level of leadership and therefore we need a more in-depth perspective on the individual level, namely LMX.

### 3.4.2 Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory

In order to correctly describe the influence leadership has on the access to resources, also the direct relationship between the leader and the subordinates needs to be considered when investigating innovation on the individual level because transformational leadership describes leadership more on the organizational level, similarities with LMX are aspects like individual consideration and intellectual stimulation (Pillai, Schriesheim, & Williams, 1999; Rosing, Frese, & Bausch, 2011). Furthermore, as outlined before, with RMT we consider resources on the mostly on the organizational level, but the influence the line

manager has on this relation is not considered. This adds the managerial level to the research. The relation between manager and employees focuses on the exchange of emotional and social support as well as different resources (Kang & Stewart, 2007). Therefore, can be considered as a resource, similar to RMT, but also the general ability for employees to use resources, what makes it a moderator of the relation between RMT and IWB.

Leader-member exchange theory emerged in the 1970's and conceptualizes the relationship and interaction between leader and their follower (Winkler, 2009). The different relationships of a work group are all unique, therefore they have to be looked at individually (Van Breukelen, Schyns, & Le Blanc, 2006) (see Tab. 2). This was the main difference this theory addressed and why it became so important in business research (Sheer, 2015).

It builds on the social exchange theory, where a reciprocal relationship between organizational actors is in focus (Blau, 1964) and it can be described as a relational approach to leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995).

LMX especially focuses on relational and dyadic aspects, which aims at increased performance, more commitment of employees, higher job satisfaction and a higher degree of mutual liking (Ilies, Nahrgang, & Morgeson, 2007). LMX is distinguished between a low-quality relationship and a high-quality relationship but does not focus too much on attributes of the leader as in the transformational leadership. LMX is perceived as a high-quality relationship by employees when they have the feeling that their leader acts in their best interest, is caring, supportive, as well as loyal and reliable (Schermuly, Meyer, & Dämmer, 2013; Walumbwa et al., 2011). Liden, Sparrowe, and Wayne (1997); Tierney (2008, 2015) see the reason for the positive outcomes of shop floor employees stemming from more focused and difficult delegated tasks assignments (Yukl, 2002), increased social support, greater risk-taking, provision of resources and increased intrinsic motivation (Taştan & Davoudi, 2015; Yidong & Xinxin, 2013). These behaviors towards employees can be complemented with greater autonomy, more access to resources and the feeling of greater responsibility (Volmer, Spurk, & Niessen, 2012). These positional resources that are distributed by leaders can be assigned to six categories namely status, service, affiliation, information, goods, and money (Wilson et al., 2010). Janssen (2005); Kanter (1988); Yuan and Woodman (2010) support the argument that employees need greater resources and support from their supervisors to engage in innovative work behavior (Gumusluoglu & Ilsev, 2009). Especially there, the importance of LMX towards the opportunity to use resources gets clear, as a good relationship is necessary to have mutual social support and therefore obtain resources. This is can be moderating the access to resources, but with more autonomy it can also directly support the generation of ideas.

In the LMX literature, it is a necessary mean for a good relationship to have social support

rather than “only” label it as a resource. This strengthens the relation between RMT and IWB, as LMX offers additionally the opportunity for employees to use other resources and can be seen as a moderator to Resource Access because when the quality of LMX is high, they receive various resources (Sparrowe & Liden, 1997; Wilson et al., 2010). To describe it a bit more in detail, this is achieved by addressing the subjective and objective characteristics’ of one’s job (Piccolo, Greenbaum, Hartog, & Folger, 2010) in form of communicating goals, vision, and strategy. If they sustain a two-way communication, where they, on the one hand, listen with respect and patience to their subordinates and on the other hand empower them to come up with opinions and concerns, which might question the status quo (Martins & Terblanche, 2003), ideas and problems can be heard and addressed. This could mean to initiate an idea and engage in IWB. Still, the number of resources that are granted to employees, depends on the quality of the relationship (Graen & Scandura, 1987), with a better interaction between follower and leader, the more resources are granted and the more overall support they receive (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). This especially enables them to act towards idea generation but also helps to champion ideas to supervisors or manager and maybe even to implement ideas (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). When employees act and engage in these activities, it is important that they also get continuous feedback and are, if needed, re-directed (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). If they are given a limited time as a resource, as it would not be otherwise possible in retail, they can come up with ideas. This work and development phase would only take longer than in other industries. In retail, they have to fulfill their numerous daily tasks and can only work part-time on it (Nijhof, Krabbendam, & Looise, 2002). This is the addition to transformational leadership; this theory contributes a leader relationship perspective because it adapts to specific connections with the employee. This exchange can be controlled by supervisors and, if supporting their actions and especially when employees want to behave innovatively, this helps to develop these capabilities. The employee must be developed more towards an organizationally focused behavior called organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) (Jafri, 2010; Schermuly et al., 2013). If employees show this behavior and go beyond their job description, they need recognition and rewards to their behavior to facilitate this engagement for the future (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). Still, Frese, Teng, and Wijnen (1999) found that the support from supervisors has more influence on the implementation (idea implementation) than on the generation of ideas (idea generation), though, it was slightly nonsignificant.

In relation to the retail industry, Reynolds and Hristov (2009) address leadership rather negative by stating that often the supervisor lacks clear leadership capabilities and is not able to drive innovation. Consequently, it has to be determined, in how far leaders are able to encourage their followers in congruence with their intrinsic motivation on an individual

basis, given the widespread shortcomings in leadership capabilities available. That makes it an interesting factor to consider in this research framework, especially when it should function besides a dependent as a moderating variable. When investigating the innovative work behavior and with the newly gained insights, it can add to the very limited existing literature on leadership in this context.

In the following, a theoretical model is presented where all theories are combined and relations are visualized. Here the relationship between available resources and IWB and the moderation of LMX is shown and clarified. Furthermore, the methodology and operationalization of the presented concepts will be outlined. This specifies, why a case study has been selected and how the concepts are investigated.

### 3.5 Theoretical model

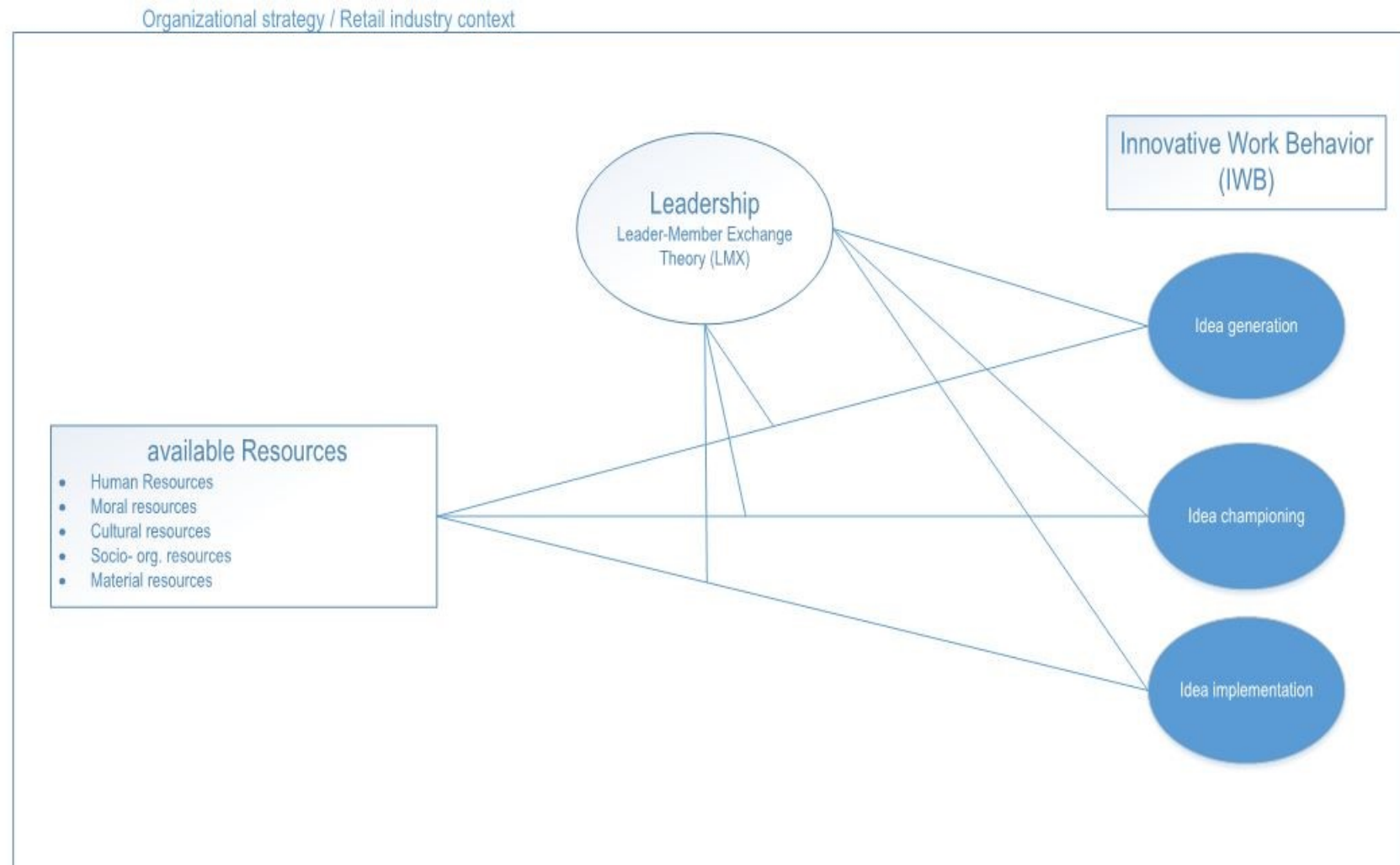


Figure 1 Conceptual model - Relation between Resources, IWB and LMX

## 4 Methodology

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In this section, it will be explained why a qualitative case study was conducted and why and how employees were interviewed. The following part will clarify why employees behave innovatively and how this is based on the relationship with their supervisor and their access to resources.

### 4.1 Research type

The aim of this study is to obtain detailed insight into the retail industry and employee behaviors. To understand and capture the context the behavior and relationships, direct observations are needed. With moral resources and relationships that are investigated, it can best be obtained from a case study and direct research in the surrounding and the context. Moral and social behavior is hard to capture from a questionnaire and will probably misunderstood. Therefore, to investigate the behavior of employees in the context of the food retail industry, an exploratory case study was conducted. The objective was to gain new insights and explanations how and to what extent employees can engage in innovative activities and what might restrain it. This form of a qualitative case study was previously chosen by different other researchers to collect data in a retail context and is widely used to research phenomenon in their natural settings (Doherty & Alexander, 2004; Oke & Gopalakrishnan, 2009). The goal of this study is to identify employees innovative work behavior and the associated mobilizing of resources to foster the process of innovation and how the leadership impacts this process. The construct of innovative work behavior has therefore been defined besides the different types sources of and their mechanisms of resource mobilization. In connection to this also the transformational leadership style was introduced and outlined which specific qualities are needed to stimulate employees towards innovation. A clear defined context and theory is given and is examined with a limited number of participants to study this phenomenon. Especially the fact that this is going to be exploratory research and it is a real-life setting, made a case study the perfect fit as a research method (Zainal, 2007). Instead of a random sampling method, the retail industry was chosen here on purpose, to get to know the environment. In this case, it is going to be a single-case study because no repetition of this research in a different setting is planned, which against all criticism, does not weaken the validity (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Performing a case study in this setting is interesting not only because it is unknown yet but also because the researcher will spend a certain amount of time in the field before conducting the data collection to increase the credibility (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). What needs to be recognized is that often the research fails, in form of a

single case study, to get back from an individual level research towards a more general picture, where in this research it is referred back to in the discussion section (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

It can be stated that this research stream is still in its infancy. To make a quick comparison, for the term “innovation” in Scopus there are around 295.000 articles available, for service-sector innovation it’s only 1081 and for retail innovation it’s only 226 in 2017 (retrieved from Scopus, 2017), so there is a lot more to learn about resource availability, as well as the retailing industry and its innovation potential. The study was conducted at a major German retail chain and more specifically in one of their stores. This store was chosen because of the enthusiastic leader it has, as well as their openness to support the master thesis project about innovative work behavior. The organization itself has narrowed every task down to specific task description and minimized needless tasks. Everyone has a predefined set of actions that one needs to perform and what is expected of them. That generally goes towards a very formalized and especially standardized work environment, where innovation is less likely to occur. That made this investigation very interesting to the extent, what might be in place or needed to be in place to make innovation possible while everything is standardized. By that, this research can be described as an explorative research because theories were tested in a completely different setting than their origin as well as trying to identify barriers that make innovations in such a setting not possible (Scapens, 1990).

## 4.2 Units of Analysis

The units of analysis have a direct and important effect on the overall quality of the study, especially in qualitative research. This not only increases the external validity but also the ability to better interpret the results (Coyne, 1997). The units here were the employees and their leaders as well as their relationship and the influence it has on innovation as well as how they interact with their leaders to acquire resources. Furthermore, there was a focus on the quality of the leader-member exchange, because it was found that it has a reasonable impact on the employee’s innovation capabilities. Interviews were conducted with employees from different parts of a big food retail market and their supervisors. To increase the overall validity of the studies, the market was chosen based on its motivated and employee focused manager. To increase the trust between researcher and participants, the market was visited for one week and all processes were inspected, what gives a certain amount of familiarity and trust with process and employees (Shenton, 2004) and to decrease the distance of the interviewer and the employees to decrease potential distance bias (Williams Jr, 1964)

## 4.3 Data collection method

The data was sampled by unstructured and semi-structured interviews. One had a predetermined set of questions but still, could add some questions and change the direction of the interview and do more in-depth to important topics. That gave considerable freedom to the researcher to adapt to the participant, but not lose control at the same time (Harrell & Bradley, 2009). Given the fact that many employees are less skillful and might have language difficulties, it was possible to rephrase some questions in order for the respondent to better understand the questions (Kajornboon, 2005). This method has several advantages on collecting data on a real-life setting (Louise Barriball & While, 1994). First, it overcomes the problem of low response rate on quantitative surveys (Hansen & Hurwitz, 1946). Secondly, it also offers the opportunity to explore attitudes, values, and beliefs, as it is one of the most important aspects of observation here. But not only this, also to verify their responses to a certain extent it is possible to observe their non-verbal communication. (Louise Barriball & While, 1994). Also, respondents cannot be influenced by the social desirability bias, due to no influence of others' during an interview (Holbrook, Green, & Krosnick, 2003). The threat potential bias is erased here because the interviews were anonymized and cannot be traced to a specific employee. To make the research thorough, an audit trail is presented in the appendix, which includes interview templates, transcripts, notes and recordings (Anney, 2014; Tobin & Begley, 2004).

### *Semi- & unstructured interviews*

With different organizational actors on four different hierarchical levels, in-depth interviews were held to examine their behaviors as well as perceptions of leadership and resource access (see Tab. 3). Therefore, three different interview scripts for the four subgroups have been developed and operationalized to make the questions suitable for the different positions.



Interview with HR managers (2)
Interviews with store and line managers (4)
Interviews with shopfloor employees (10)

Table 2. Interview and respondent overview

The questions formulated are mainly descriptive and structural, to obtain detailed insights and understand processes and limitations. Thereby, yes or no answers are prohibited and the participants can elaborate on their own perceptions and thoughts.

First, open-ended interviews with HR managers were held, to check what HR practices, guidelines, and process descriptions are in place to instruct store managers and line managers concerning idea management and resource availability. In such an atmosphere, participants are more trustful, feel comfortable (Ramos, 1989) and might reveal information they wouldn't have otherwise (LaRossa, Bennett, & Gelles, 1981). This makes sense at this point because of only very limited documents, concerning resource availability or handling of ideas by employees, exist. This form of data collection lacks generalizability and no complete understanding can be derived (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005), still, in this context additional information can be obtained which will be cross-checked in the other interviews. No specific template was developed, rather a list of topics that needed to be discussed, which is displayed in the Appendix. The interview partner is the Head of HR for the western region as well as Head of Personal Affairs in this region, they oversee all employee-related activities and as part of their job description, they create training and development programs for all employees in the region. The length of was between 10 to 35 minutes.

The semi-structured interviews with the store as well as the overall sales and line managers were the next in line. Thereby, specific differences between the shop floor and their direct

superior positions could be discovered. All employees work as full-time employees and have a permanent contract. For this research, the participants were asked previously if they are willing to participate in the research and all interviews were held in their store to make them as comfortable as possible taking part in this research. Here, this method was more suitable because the concepts of interests are well-known and to make the concepts coherent for the participants. The questions are structured in themselves, but are open-ended, allowing the participant to reveal as much detailed information as they want (Turner III, 2010). This structure also helps the coding procedure as well as the makes the structure of the analysis afterward easier. The previous inspection of the different departments did not serve as a tool to already identify specific departments, solely for the reason of understanding their daily routines and processes. The corresponding interview template and an example of a transcript are attached in the Appendix.

Lastly, the interviews with the lowest level, the focus group, were interviewed. These interviewees belong to the previously interviewed line managers and are all working at least 20 hours per week in this job, mostly they do have fixed-term contracts. With their input the final comparison between all hierarchical structures are possible and different positions in the organization can be connected.

The general procedure is to shortly introduce myself again to the participant and instruct them what is going to happen, what they can expect and that they should raise any feelings of discomfort immediately. Furthermore, every respondent needed to sign a form informing them about the anonymous use of their data and the use as a source for my research. After the interviews, every respondent was sent their interview transcript, for them to check if anything was misunderstood or needs to be deleted on their behalf.

## 4.4 Document analysis

Given the size and complexity of the organization, document analysis was conducted besides the information gathered by the interviews. This information helped in the way that the organization could be better understood, but will be anonymized. For the protection of the organization's identity, a non-disclosure agreement was signed to prohibit any information be connecting to the organization. With using a document analysis, it was also possible to understand complex constructs better as a deeper understanding and a more profound insight into the research problem was obtained. Bowen (2009) further stresses the fact that not the quantity of documents is important but the quality to retrieve valuable information. By the analysis of documents, it was also easier to obtain a more objective view on constructs than asking for the opinion of an employee (van Aken, Berends, & Van

der Bij, 2012). By the use of interviews and such an analysis, triangulation is possible and helps to increase the credibility of the study (Bowen, 2009; Houghton et al., 2013). Nevertheless, with it, there also came some limitations: insufficient detail often is a problem, because the documents have a different purpose than research, therefore the document might lack the needed content. The fact that the organization provides those documents might limit the documents due to corporate policies and procedures – named biased selectivity. But still, this is a valuable source of additional data and will be used to better understand and describe the research setting. The data under investigation are especially how are ideas handled in the organization and what is regulated concerning evaluation, rewarding and past ideas. Another interesting impact is how the procedure is communicated from the top management to the decentralized stores and their managers. Here, already strengths and weaknesses were identified and gave a good view on what to emphasize in the interviews and analysis.

## 4.5 Operationalization

The questionnaire consisted of questions addressing to what extent innovative work behavior is possible and how the different stages of the iterative process are possible and have been conducted (see Tab. 4). Furthermore, there was a focus on how employees could mobilize a different kind of resources to promote and realize their idea. The resource mobilization theory will be changed in the way that the questions fit the retail environment because it was originally intended to describe social movements (see Tab. 5). Also, the leadership style and LMX played a role about IWB but will be looked at also in connection with the RMT (see Tab. 5). This will specifically be addressed in the interviews with the Associated leaders of the ordinary employees.

<u>Idea generation</u>	<u>Idea development</u>	<u>Idea implementation</u>
<b><i>Employee looking for new trends, which result in ideas for new processes (De Jong &amp; Den Hartog, 2010; Janssen, 2004)</i></b>	<b><i>Employee “pushes” the idea towards managers (De Jong &amp; Den Hartog, 2010)</i></b>	<b><i>Employee wants to be involved and apply the new innovation in the work routines (De Jong &amp; Den Hartog, 2010)</i></b>
<b><i>Employee creates idea for improvement of current processes (De Jong &amp; Den Hartog, 2010)</i></b>	<b><i>Employee builds coalitions and involves the right people for a successful implementation (De Jong &amp; Den Hartog, 2010)</i></b>	<b><i>Employee tries to modify the innovation to fit the strategy and daily routine (Damanpour, 1991; Kleysen &amp; Street, 2001; West &amp; Farr, 1990)</i></b>
<b><i>Employee looks out for solutions to identify problems and performance gaps (De Jong &amp; Den Hartog, 2007, 2010; Kleysen &amp; Street, 2001)</i></b>	<b><i>Employee can mobilize resources needed for the innovation (Damanpour, 1991; Kleysen &amp; Street, 2001)</i></b>	
	<b><i>Employee is willing to take risks and showing faith for the innovation (Kleysen &amp; Street, 2001)</i></b>	

Table 3. Operationalization of IWB

<u>Leadership empowering employees</u>	<u>Resources to behave innovatively</u>
<b><i>Leader shows commitment to the job and emphasizes the different talents in his employees</i></b>	<b><i>Moral resources: relational trust (Bryk &amp; Schneider, 1996); social support for stress on the job (Baruch-Feldman et al., 2002)</i></b>
<b><i>Leader finds a way to reward employees for performance outside their job description</i></b>  <b><i>The performance of the employees is monitored and checked frequently</i></b>  <b><i>The leader is a role model and shows behavior that motivates others</i></b>	<b><i>Cultural resources: information regarding strategy and vision (Edwards &amp; Gillham, 2013), communication by using the intranet (McCarthy &amp; Zald, 1977a),</i></b>  <b><i>Team-orientation and respect oriented, freedom and autonomy culture</i></b>
<b><i>The employees are psychological empowered towards more self-efficacy and self-leadership qualities</i></b>	<b><i>Material resources: physical resources and information resources available (Edwards &amp; McCarthy, 2004)</i></b>
<b><i>The leader facilitates a communication with the subordinates where they can also rise, critics</i></b>	<b><i>Socio-organizational resources: tacit knowledge exchange in (in)formal networks (Kogut &amp; Zander, 1992; Nahapiet &amp; Ghoshal, 1998), exchange with external</i></b>

	<i>parties (suppliers, customers, private network) (Oerlemans et al., 1998)</i>
<b><i>The leader grants time, money and information to the subordinates</i></b>	

Table 4. Operationalization of Leadership and Resources for IWB

## 4.6 Data analysis

The interviews have been recorded with permission of the interviewee to make it possible to analyze and work with the data afterward. By recording these interviews, it was possible to make detailed transcripts and apply the qualitative data analysis method of coding. The interviews have been analyzed using the software Atlas.ti. All respondents have been labeled and are referred to this labels throughout the Result section (see Fig. 2). Standard

Shop floor	Store & Line manager	HR manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SF 1.1</li> <li>•SF 1.2</li> <li>•SF 1.3</li> <li>•SF 2.1</li> <li>•SF 2.2</li> <li>•SF 2.3</li> <li>•SF 3.1</li> <li>•SF 3.2</li> <li>•SF 3.3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•SM 1</li> <li>•LM 1</li> <li>•LM 2</li> <li>•LM 3</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•HR 1</li> <li>•HR 2</li> </ul>

Figure 2. Interview partner

shop floor employees have been labeled with SF 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, etc. Thereby different departments could be distinguished and the interactions in the work group emphasized. Line managers are labeled as LM 1,2,3, etc. according to their respective department

and the HR managers are referred to as HR 1 & 2. This method of coding is since its development in the 70's, a widely and most famous tool to analyze especially qualitative data (i.e. interviews) (Edlinger, 2015; Saldaña, 2015). All the interviews were held in German and additional notes were taken to also take non-verbal communication into account. Quotes that are used during the results section; were translated into English to make them understandable to a broader audience. Open coding stems from the idea of "grounded theory" introduced by Glaser, Strauss, Strauss, and Corbin (1967) and wants to build rather than test the theory. It describes findings that were made and based on them, theory is built. The coding procedure here was a mixture of a pre-determined set of codes from theory and the literature as well as emergent codes, that came up during the analysis and coding of the interviews. Therefore, this procedure is a mixture of establishing a new theoretical framework and testing an already existing one. Coding was established to be

able to handle big amounts of raw data and to classify them. Especially in data retrieved from interviews are said to be biased and therefore an approach that limits these are needed, but still, interviews remain one of the widely used data collection method (Adams i'hD, 2010; Gill, Stewart, Treasure, & Chadwick, 2008). This enabled the researcher to find alternative meanings for the found evidence. On one hand, coding enables systematic working ways and on the other hand, stimulates creativity by making comparisons and the ability to ask specialized questions. To sum it up it can be used to “identify, develop, and relate the concepts that are the building blocks of theory.” (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 13).

## 5 Analysis & Results

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In the following, I will describe the findings from my document analysis and case study. The findings are structured to the underlying theories and the theoretical model. Given this and based on the findings, all five different resources and the employee's access to these will be described and how they can engage in IWB. Besides this, in every section, the influence of the LMX will be considered. First, the organizational structure will be discussed, where a lot came from analyzing organizational documents. Second, the results of the interviews are shown together with the analysis from Atlas t.i.

### 5.1 Organizational vision, strategy & innovation

Overall the industry strives for efficiency and to profit from economies of scale, as everything needs to be as simple as possible and stores have an article range between 30 to 60000 different products. They want to further develop existing processes and want to stay with those that cannot be developed further. Furthermore, the employee should get more into the focus according to their updated philosophy. The employees should get more feedback and the supervisor should be open to critics from the employees. Still, the employees should stick to standards and guidelines to ensure the same level of quality in each of their stores and should focus on their work, as it is described by the organization. Innovation does **not** get emphasized by the vision or as a basic idea behind their guidelines and structures. There is no focus on innovation to be found in the strategic positioning nor the HR philosophy formulated.

#### *Intended Leadership*

The overall organizational values are performance, dynamic, and fairness. Performance is defined to the extent that it needs actions, purposefulness, courage, and passion. Dynamic, here the organization puts emphasis on the fact that willingness to change is extremely important for their business as well as that taking responsibility, but is only thought for both leaders in the store and management. Lastly, fairness is all about respect and appraisal.

This is assisted by a high-five mentality, where the organization formulates overall guidelines that should ensure continuous performance and growth. These, address especially the leaders and line managers across the organization. All store and line managers should set goals together with the employees and constantly monitor if these are met, if not, to sit together with the employee and work on a solution. Furthermore, they should function as a trustworthy person and should facilitate open communication. The long-term goal for leaders in the organization is to further develop every employee and strive for constant improvements of the business. This is not happening organizational wide in the last two years, as indicated by the HR manager. Furthermore, they have a work council. If they expect a feedback meeting to be negative for an employee, they can forbid it and the organization is not allowed to have a formal feedback with the employees, at least not in writing. With these updated values and guidelines also a new feedback procedure is planned, but this still needs implementation. Another mentioned aspect that is according to the literature is that tasks should be delegated to employees and responsibilities should stay where they are. Overall every single employee should continuously develop, otherwise, they will stop performing at the level they are at. Though the guidelines indicate a lot of aspects that are consistent with the innovation literature and the intended leadership behavior is in a lot of points according to the transformational leadership literature. Within the organization, every employee can directly communicate ideas to their immediate supervisor, at least that is what internal documents state. To make a statement regarding LMX, generally, the organizations try to have a pleasant workplace and a favorable relation between leader and employees.

## 5.2 Organizational structure & guidelines

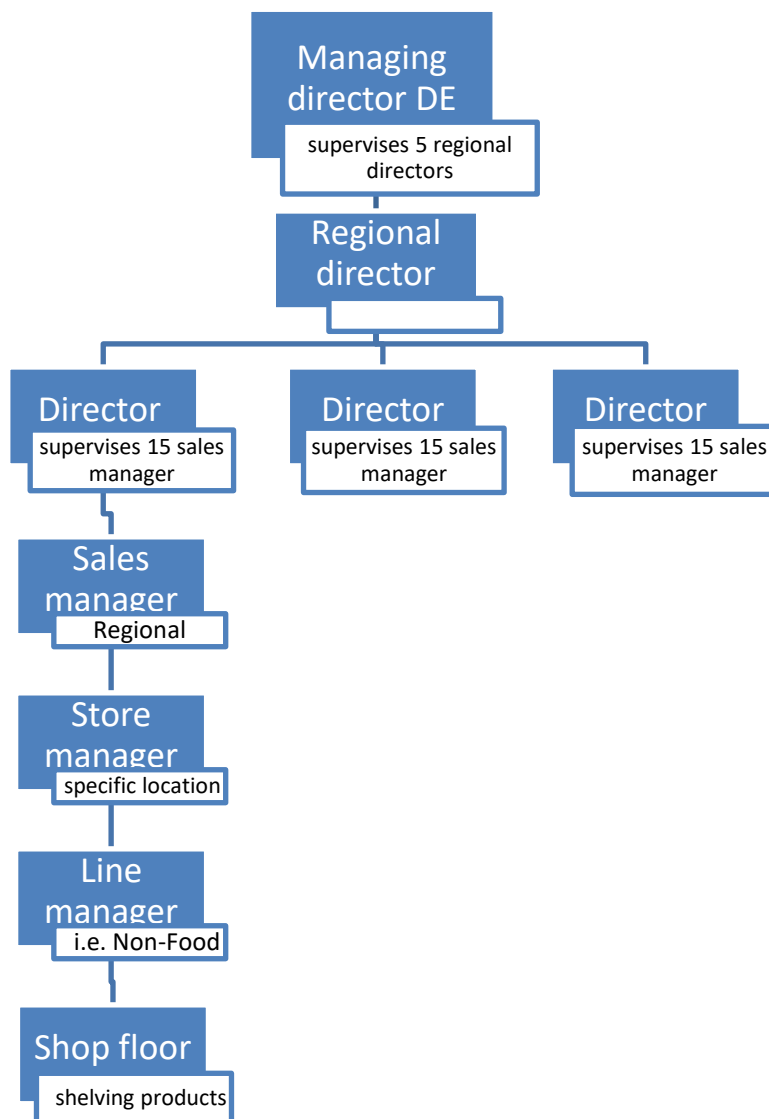


Figure 3 Hierarchical structure

The organizational structure (see Fig. 3) from the company under investigation is as follows; every store has a general store manager and around five to six line managers. The store is supervised by an area/sales manager, who normally supervises around six to seven stores. These area managers' report back to the director, who is in the regional headquarter. This director is directly below the managing director, of which there are only five in whole Germany. Around 80% of the employees below the line managers are working on a fixed-term contract and are not permanently employed. The HR function, in general, has a very

supporting and administrative function and is a more reactive process. If the employees in sales and distribution see problems or room for improvement they call HR and indicate the need. This mostly concerns incidents with work council, misbehavior of employees or personnel shortage. This market has around 120 employees and the retailer itself has in the region around 14.000 employees. Referring to the number of 120 employees adherent to the market, it can be seen as representative of the average number of 114 employees per market. The different sections in such a market are divided by the products overall characteristic (i.e. non-food, dairy, vegetables & fruits, etc.). In every division, there are superior employees who facilitate the level of quality and work processes of the other employees.



The employees under investigation are in this scheme the shop floor employees, the line manager, and the store manager. Additional two HR managers are interviewed, who act as HR Business Partners to the Directors.

### 5.3 Employee- driven innovation

Looking at the single employee and what is expected from him and what emphasis is placed on their ideas and their autonomy to come up with these, there are some limitations.

Everything is directed towards a top-down approach and most decisions are made in management. This erases a clear structure that would favor and empower EDI and does indicate an overall structure, where the second-order EDI is more a third-order EDI. This describes the situation better because if the management wants to realize a project or try out something new and want employee input, they reach out to them and invite them to take part in a project.

*“[...] most of the time these are projects that come from sales & distribution and if they decide there should be a tryout in a store, that could be anything, and there needs to be a lot rearranged, then we place someone there who should try to solve the problem and come up with new ideas. If this is the fact and we can save some money, then the employee also gets a reward.” (HR 2)*

So, the organization wants continuous improvements and innovation, but to the extent how the management wants it to happen. Also, most of the employees indicated that they do not have the feeling that their ideas or extra work are valued by the organization.

*“No, our store manager never said we should look for improvements.” (SF 3.3)*

*“Well, we should look for the processes, but sometimes we are presented as dumb and then you don’t do it again.” (SF 1.2)*

*“(Me): So, no room for own ideas and improvements? No, absolutely not. Not after our reorganization of the market.” (SF 2.3)*

So generally speaking, EDI is not really possible in the organization, what also limits the aspects for IWB, because the focus for innovation lays not with the employees. In the next abstract, if an employee has an idea, is described and analyzed how they can raise their ideas.

## 5.4 IWB and Idea management

If employees have an idea and directly want to communicate it to management and not their supervisor or direct manager, they have a system called “XY-Ideation” (XY for company title).

In this process, they formulate an idea as something to optimize an existing process or service. Ideas, as predefined by the organization, should aim at increasing the customer and employee satisfaction, decrease material and operating costs, increase work safety as well as health, accident and environmental protection. Every “idea” is regarded to as new if it has never been analyzed before, piloted or already been implemented. You can raise your idea (already full solution and cost calculation) to the central idea management via mail, post or online form. The internal function, that is in the overall marketing department, handles all ideas and evaluates them. They can be either rejected, further evaluated by a transnational manager, accepted or send to piloting in well-selected stores. The handbook also states that it takes around eight different steps until a decision regarding the idea is reached. Furthermore, it is directly indicated that all the incentives that stem from an idea will be paid before taxes and belongs to the official salary – narrowly defined how to handle innovative ideas. The general procedure does exist but is not known to employees.

*“I think we can tell it our direct manager or the customer hotline, but I am not sure.”  
(SF 1.3)*

*“No, I don’t know other ways than my supervisor.” (SF 2.3)*

All employees with managerial responsibility should motivate the shop floor employees to actively take part in the process of “idea management”, at least in theory.

In the retail sector, a wide range of different education levels can be observed. Those employees who work as staff on the shop floor and move goods and keep a market running are often minimally educated and possess no specialist knowledge. In this organizational level, 80 percent of the employees work on a flexible basis and do not have a permanent contract. This is the result of making it possible for the customer to buy grocery and other goods at nearly every time they want during the week and also the reason of cost reduction by introducing flexible work hours and flexible employees. As Dawson (2000) argues, the increasing number of stores and products available to make use of scale economies also brings the danger of losing the contact to the customer.

Still, no information can be found about how these formulated guidelines are communicated to the store managers and line managers nor to the employees. Employees and line managers should be the first ones to consult with an idea or if any questions arise. Here,

already the first gap can be identified, which indicates communication problems and thereby missing cultural resources, which will be discussed in a later section.

## 5.4 Resources to engage in innovative work behavior

The general tone is that employees generally have a lot of ideas and suggestions for minor innovations or changes. Most of the employees indicated that they had ideas in the past for relocating products or increasing the turnover by changing the optic of the shelves. The ideas were all incremental and did only affect the store they are working in. No employee indicated in the interview that they championed an idea to the central management of ideas. All suggestions stayed within the environment of this specific market and in one case an idea has been championed to the regional sales manager, who supervises around 6 to 7 stores. The retail industry lives from their employees who take care of the markets and that product are readily available. Every employee needs different skills and qualifications to start a job in this area. The focus here was especially on shop floor employees and their direct supervisors, to make statements regarding EDI, IWB, and LMX.

### 5.4.1 Human Resources

Human resources are a lot of their business, still, the focus in hiring and recruiting employees is not towards innovation. In the second interview with an HR manager, it was indicated that the hiring process is not formalized to specific characteristics, at least not for shop floor employees. They need to fill shelves in most cases and that it is no job that presumes specific knowledge. In an optimum case, they have worked in the retail industry before. The focus here is more on relational aspects and intangible “feelings”, so each store manager who hires people should feel that he/she can work together with the employee. People who should also have personal responsibilities like a division manager should already have worked in this position and have experience in a retail environment, but specific characteristics are not checked here as well. Moreover, they also try to recruit a lot of employees internally and therefore these people also do not possess any expert knowledge that helps to develop ideas or specialized skills and abilities that could foster employee innovation.

*“There are no fixed criteria for the hiring. If you search for cleaning personal, as an example, you are glad if the application is complete. [...] If we would look at the hard facts and you are good, but you cannot work with your supervisor, then this does not function very well.” (HR 2)*

So, looking at the resume and the employees' qualifications of job applicants is done only to a certain extent. Some employees do not need to have formal qualifications at all. Therefore, on the level of ground floor employees, there are no advantages in form of specific knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) that foster innovative behavior and employee-driven innovation. As the other HR manager indicated this organization also hires people who broke up with school and do not have other perspectives. They try to give a lot of people a chance, what is from an innovative perspective not optimal, whereas from a corporate responsibility perspective this is a strongly positive aspect in these economies of scale.

Another aspect that needs to be considered is that a high proportion of employees simply fulfill their job and are happy with it because they only work 16 to 24 hours in a week and are simply hired to fill the shelves. Because of this simplified job description and the limited amount of time, they are often not involved in those activities. These people also do not expect to get other tasks and therefore are satisfied as it is.

*"I come for 16 hours a week, I still have little kids and have to take care of my father, I really do love the atmosphere here and I am happy with the job." (SF 2.4)*

So, this also has an influence even though they experience a good social culture and teamwork.

By this it can be stated, the organization does not try to enrich their workforce by skilled people, nor by people who bring fresh ideas and motivation into the organization, they just need to fulfill very basic tasks in their everyday life and are often missing extra abilities. That means, this resource as a support for IWB is not existing and the top management does not place emphasis on this. What could be interpreted positively towards LMX is the fact that they place emphasis on a relational aspect like the social behavior in the interview and their first impression of social capabilities. This could give a good basis for a high-quality relationship between leader and employee. From a resource perspective, they put their focus on efficiency and cost-leadership, where they, as they define it, need to put their focus on other things than excess capacities. This hinders IWB because the basis for innovative behavior according to RMT is not stimulated by specific skills, knowledge, and abilities as the literature suggests.

## 5.4.2 Moral & Socio-organizational culture

Moral and socio-organizational culture is put here together because a strong linkage got clear in the literature and was also observed during the interviews. This concerns the aspects of social support, trust and information exchange among employees as well as the overall team culture. How to manage the employees in the stores is the work of every store manager independently. Nevertheless, the leader's behavior should be guided by overall standards. These standards do include that employees should be valued and a two-way communication should be facilitated, but it is the responsibility of the store manager to realize this where he/she has a lot of autonomy. Also, they should receive frequent feedback on their performance and see what needs improvement. That only happens very informal and not on a professional basis, as the store manager indicates. This was referred to also earlier, as there is no actual procedure that regulates feedback – at the moment.

*“in the store, what might be different among my colleagues, that I do give recognition to my employees. They might not realize that and say that it's not correct but I know that I do it. In this way, the people who perform well know that they do a good job and those who do not get recognition and praise get their critics over the missing recognition.” (SM)*

But this also means that every other function of their standards lies in their interpretation. The same goes for ideation and continuous improvement.

*“I think we do not need to reinvent the wheel, we already got a lot of improvements over the last years. You can be sure that every idea we have or the employee generates has been checked by the headquarter seven or eight times. They will have a lot of good reasons why this has not been changed.” (SM)*

*“I think, there are around 50% of employees who are able to behave more innovative, but you have to say it requires some abilities, some possess them, some don't. This is the theory if you ask them who wants to do something extra or has ideas: no one.” (SM)*

This all points to a very rigorous realization of the developed standards, leadership principles, ideation process and access to resources. Everything needs to be simple and there are no excess capacities, everyone should always think about the cost-value ratio. What needs to be said is, that the explicit word “innovation” is not named any document reviewed. That means every supervisor and the store manager who receives these documents have no order to work towards innovation or come up with ideas in their daily job. While some studies have already proven the positive effect of explicitly setting

innovation or innovative ideas as a formulated goal (Scott & Bruce, 1994; Shalley, 1991; Shalley & Gilson, 2004; Speller & Schumacher, 1975), this fact undermines the potential for IWB in the given context. This already shows that the basic orientation of the organization is not towards innovation or further development but more on efficiency, increasing turnover, to face and treat employees respectfully and to allow critics. The newly developed slogan in 2016 is all about simplicity and to make nothing too complicated and the basic values there are performance, dynamic, and fairness.

#### *5.4.2.1 Team-culture & Social structure*

The general culture can be described as a very team-oriented one and there is a lot of social support among colleagues. If you are not actively taking part in this team-oriented working (culture) then you won't ever receive social support (socio- organizational) on the job, which would prohibit them from discussing ideas with colleagues.

*"I have never experienced a store like this, wheresoever you need help, you will get it." (HR 2.1)*

*"In our stores, itself, there is a lot of exchange on a cooperative level. You should not be misled here, if you do not have this cooperative level with your colleagues, then you have a serious problem as an employee." (HR 1)*

*"Super, there is nothing to complain about, we have a good communication, you can always rely on each other. Absolutely no problem, otherwise the work wouldn't make fun." (SF 2.3)*

Both trust and social support were seen to be influenced by the LMX negatively as well as positively. The employees in one department indicated that their relationship with their leader is problematic and there is no work delegated to them nor they receive recognition if they perform well. They still indicated that their social support and trust is high among them, except when the leader is around.

*"Yes, we do support each other and care, except for one. If she is around, then this atmosphere is gone. Otherwise, there is no problem at all, everyone knows what to do and we help each other out, when she appears, this is gone." (SF 1.2)*

This made them feel very uncomfortable and when they confronted their leader with this matter, they were told to accept the situation and move on and otherwise they should pull their consequences out of it - resign. This made them feel no leader support and increased their insecurity. This indeed had a negative influence on their innovative work behavior. They indicated that they just want to perform their job and do not want to risk anything more

because they feel a growing tension between them and the supervisors, the other interview even refuses to answer the question about the leader. This shows the missing open attitude and delegation of tasks to subordinates.

*“Well, after a time like this, you just get to feel dumb. You just don’t look for improvement or changes anymore, you don’t think about it. Maybe at the beginning, if you are still new, but nowadays this does not happen anymore. [...] If we have an idea, this gets blocked away.” (SF1.2)*

This means also that they simply do not want to take risks anymore because they see the relation problematic and do not want to risk their job for an idea they have. This shows a low-quality relationship and how leadership, in general, can negatively influence IWB and Resource Access. This kind of leadership is more transactional, as clear tasks are named and monitored if these are done correctly, but if something is done well they do not receive recognition or rewards. Already here IWB is blocked and prohibited, so a rather negative influence.

But, on the other hand, there was also a department, where the employees indicated a very positive culture in their department. They trust each other in their jobs and take suggestions from each other in their daily tasks. Also, the trust is high among them, as they would vouch for each other in situations and take shifts if someone needs to take care of a private situation. They have different characters with different backgrounds in their division and all know that and see that everyone is considered.

*“Here, it is very special, we all have our backs in emergencies if someone has a private problem, everyone is accounted for and we would all step into the beach for someone. [...] It already feels familiar here.” (SF 2.2)*

Here the idea generation also was present to a certain extent, as this employee said that to special occasions he made suggestions for creative constructions in the market or to arrange everything nicely that the customer has something to experience. He indicated that this was always nicely accepted by their supervisor and he got support.

*“This was definitely possible if you named a reason and what you wanted to do, this was always possible and was spontaneously possible to implement it.” (SF 2.2)*

Also, different employees were delegated different tasks and responsibilities in the department as it also helps the culture in the department and idea generation to occur. In another department, also with a positive relation between leader and employees, also idea generation and idea championing could be observed. One indicated an incremental idea

and that they also bespoke this with their supervisor and finally implemented this small idea. Implementation is limited here because it was only this store which was affected and the store manager just had to say “yes”, but an idea could be realized and implemented. Tough, there was no longer process involved in developing or championing, this cannot really be labeled as an innovative work behavior. Still, the employee had intrinsic motivation to change something about their daily processes and the leader facilitated a high-quality relationship, even though the resources that can be granted are limited.

*“[...] This was actually an idea, which we realized in the proposed way.” (SF 3.2)*

So, there could clearly be a difference between the departments observed, some indicated more motivation for idea generation and championing, whereas with only two exceptions employees generally feel confident that they can contact their supervisor with an idea and get treated respectfully. This was the reverse attitude, open-minded and delegating tasks and responsibilities.

*“If I have an idea I contact our supervisor and we discuss it. If it makes sense and she is satisfied, we do it.” (SF 2.3)*

*“Yes, I also had ideas in the past and we adopted them. So, if I have an idea, I talk with our supervisor, only to our store manager I do not bring ideas, that stays in the department.” (SF 3.2)*

So, employees generally have an interest in making suggestions and sometimes have ideas, but, depending on the culture in the department and the connected LMX, this often suppressed and it is very rare that employees generate and champion ideas. People who were not delegated tasks felt treated unfair and were frustrated if they needed to stick to their simple jobs, which is contradicting LMX-theory.

*“All the jobs are taken by our leader; we just should fill the shelves and pull out old articles. The rest she does, we always need to do all the work.” (SF 3.3)*

#### **5.4.2.2 Tacit knowledge exchange**

Regardless of their leader, as we learned, the employees are connected and exchange knowledge and experiences though, they might have a low-quality relationship with their leader. A lot of their tasks are standardized, still, they do a lot of work where they must find a way to manage it, thus they have a lot of tacit knowledge. Important for innovation is that this tacit knowledge is interchangeably used by the employees in order to generate novel ideas. From the visit to the store as well as the interviews, this exchange could be observed very frequently. There are a lot of situations where the employees discuss how they



managed to perform an activity or dealt with a problem. In the interviews, this was also something where everyone answered positively and without a doubt.

*“Yes, we do it all the time during our daily work.” (LM 3.1)*

*“I really like to exchange knowledge with my colleagues. If I see something or we discuss a problem we always try to help each other with the different knowledge we possess.” (SF 1.2)*

Referring back to the dimensions of RMT, the social support and tacit knowledge exchange are a good example of Aggregation of resources which are available to them. Still, this aggregation is only limited to social support and tacit knowledge exchange it can be labeled as an aggregation.

#### **5.4.2.3 External knowledge exchange**

Additional to this exchange internally is the exchange with external employees. This can be customers, supplier, employees from other retail stores, etc. This is a bit more limited than the internal exchange. A lot indicated that the exchange with customers or suppliers does not happen. Often they are visited by representatives from a specific brand, but with those, it is more like a formal business transaction.

*“With those, we only talk about their products. Everyone wants to display their products bigger than those of the competition and if we can agree on something we sometimes get a product for free, that’s it. So, it is more about our usual business.” (SF 1.2)*

Employee's externally exchange is with employees in other stores, but only with those within the same retail chain. A lot of the interviewees have previously worked in other stores and are well-connected. One line manager for example talks with her old colleagues how they handle new processes or how they, as line managers, deal with problems that occur on a daily basis. Sometimes it is just an exchange of specific products and their experiences with it. But they also might just give social support to colleagues from other stores, who call desperately and need some support and a familiar colleague.

*“I call my old colleague a few kilometers from here. We have worked 12 years together and I know that she is really experienced and sometimes has a good idea. It is a must do. I mean we all have to deal with the same business and standards.” (LM 2.1)*

Thus, it can be derived at the conclusion that the external exchange happens, but more on the level of line managers and store managers and most of the time with people who

operate in another store of the hypermarket chain. There are a lot of ideas generated through the team culture and the exchange, but they are most of the time incremental and do not influence overall processes or tasks. Still, the culture empowers others and ideas are sometimes communicated to superior employees. Still, the moral and socio-organizational resources cannot change the fact that the retail industry with its characteristics prohibits IWB and ideas more often “die” on their way up the hierarchy.

This type of resources has until now the greatest influence on IWB and here LMX could be analyzed. The quality of LMX was mixed and clearly shows that some employees receive more autonomy, information and task delegated than others. The employee who facilitate a better relationship with their leaders also generated some incremental ideas, whereas the other completely lost their intrinsic motivation and do not consider behaving innovatively. Still, because this external exchange is not possible the dimension patronage is not fulfilled and neither is co-option and appropriation, because of no other organization partners up with them. In this context and industry, the rivalry is extremely high and therefore every organization aims to expand their market share and turnover.

### 5.4.3 Material & cultural resources

In this section the access to physical and tangible resources in form of intranet access, time and information as well as capital will be analyzed, but also the motivation and usage of these resources, therefore here the material and cultural resources are aligned.

*“the employee has several information sources that can be used, it is all there, but the employee simply does not use it. If he would use the sources available, then they would receive already a lot more information than usual. “ (SM)*

#### 5.4.3.1 Information resources

This begins with general information, each employee should only receive the information, he or she needs to perform their work, so no additional information is required nor provided. This is a paradox as, on the one hand, each employee should think critically about their job and process to further develop it, but on the other hand, everyone should focus on their job and not try to make everything too complicated – on the shop floor.

*„the employee must make it as easy as the can to also have fun at work. If we would complicate the tasks for them, then we would make it to challenging for them. [...] But, how to work on existing processes and what can be improved that comes from our headquarter, because we are a standardized organization. I am not a self-managing store and must stick to our standardization concept.” (SM)*

Information as a resource is needed in all three phases of IWB, where an idea needs to be generated and modified. To begin with information, in the headquarter and regional headquarters, every employee possesses a personalized access to information via the intranet, where all kinds of information regarding strategy, current activities and processes can be found.

In a market the situation is different, there are 5 computers available for the whole staff of a shift (around 40 people). Most of the time these computers are occupied with administrative work to manage the daily business in form of preparing posters, ordering new products and personnel planning. Often, it is the case that these computers are occupied with these different tasks and are not freely accessible for employees. In every store, there are opportunities where the people can access the computers, but it might negatively influence your reputation among the colleagues because the culture is about working hard and not “sitting around and surfing the intranet”.

*“If you are at work sitting at a computer and you are browsing the intranet and someone wants to do something “useful” at this moment, well then you will get criticism.” (SF 2.2)*

The reputation you might get is one aspect, that a lot of older employees did not even know that this option as an information source exists, is another. Often, they also do have a big lack of knowledge to handle computers or technical equipment and need an extensive introduction procedure. This makes the computer as a resource less accessible for them.

*“Well, I think you can get information from your supervisor but the computer I do not use, I hate these things, they are confusing me.” (SF 3.3)*

Here, also the store manager sees the problem of motivation, a lot of employees are simply not interested in information that goes beyond their work and does not concern them, only some are. This makes it hard for employees to develop organization directed behavior and efforts that go beyond their scope. This is one possible source another where again the leaders and their deputy play an important role, are meetings. Each morning they have a meeting where they discuss the business of today and what everyone should emphasize and take care of. All division managers exchange information, which also includes information like goals for the upcoming weeks and what processes they should have a look at. But mostly it is about scrap products that needed to be thrown away and how this can be prohibited in the future, but it is not a brainstorming session to solve problems. This is an alternative way and more accessible way for employees to receive information, but if the leader isolates the employees, this is less feasible. So, there is a high dependency on the quality of the LMX. There it was also able to see a connection when employees have

an intact relation with their leaders, they are willing to and do generate incremental ideas, but if they are more isolated they lost motivation and are not interested to get information nor to generate ideas.

*“In morning meetings, we get information. [...] We get to know what happens currently here and what goals the organization aims for with their current strategy for the short-term.” (SF 2.2)*

*“Nothing at all. Where can I find such information about strategy?” (SF 1.2)*

*“Indeed, she talks a lot with us and tells us what is currently happening. [...] and if I see something that could be done differently I say it; I mean I always tell her what I think.” (SF 2.3)*

#### **5.4.3.2 Time resources**

Another aspect of resources is time. It was indicated during all interviews that the time in the market is a rare and valuable resource. Especially, on days where all the goods for advertisements need to get into the market, most workers are extremely busy and occupied to deal with their daily workload. Also, the HR manager sees time pressure and scarcity as the ultimate barrier to innovation.

*“[...] Time pressure. They must perform various activities under high pressure and do not have time to perform innovative work nor generate ideas.” (HR 1)*

*“It is not the case that we get any time for such activities from our store manager. If we have a day where it is not that busy then we could do these activities, but normally you don’t do it.” (SF 2.2)*

So, there is often simply no time to engage in idea generation, nor in championing and implementing an idea. This resource is relatively free from the influence of the quality of LMX because even if he would allow the employees to generate ideas, they would simply have no time to deal with it. Time is also a federally regulated aspect because the employees are getting paid according to pay scale, they have to stick to specific laws and regulations. A simple example. If you work an additional hour to your regular eight hours work day, you need to do a twenty-minute break. Additionally, if this cannot be read from the time stamps, there will be fines for the organization by the federal state and to the employee. So, here their size and standardization of the organization have a huge negative impact on time resources, which also upset the employees.

*“[...] I was really upset a few days ago, I really love my job, I am the last person who says “I am not doing any extra hours” and then I came over my regular work*

*hours and received a letter saying that I did 5! minutes too little break for my worked hours.” (SF 3.2)*

So, not only it hinders employees to take the time to reflect and critically think about their job, they even get an official warning.

As Information are hardly available and time pressure is high, the employees do not engage in the RMT dimension self- production of resources, because if they receive resources it is more pushed towards them rather than pulled by them (missing motivation to gather additional information).

#### *5.4.3.3 Expert knowledge*

Considering expert knowledge, and their access to it in the overall culture, the organization offers several pieces of training for employees with a supervising function, where they learn how to realize these standards and to further develop their capabilities. These meetings aim at increasing their leadership capabilities either on an economic or social basis. So, at best, this helps to influence the factor leadership and is an aspect of their interaction. It was indicated it did, at least In theory.

*“We learned to handle our employees after the sandwich procedure, you can criticize them, but you also need to recognize the good things and reward them.”  
(LM 1.1)*

So they learn how to supervise their employees in a more social manner and to better support them, but an innovation focus is here missing as well. Still, a lacking factor here is, that these employees do not have debriefing meetings with their managers in the stores and often cannot transfer their knowledge, as it was indicated by one HR manager. They receive the training, but the knowledge often stays with the trained one and if he/she cannot apply it, it will be gone in weeks and will have no impact at all.

*“After these training, you go back to your market, your supervisor does not take care what you have learned or what does the market overall can benefit from it. So, people tend to have a few days in a month where they receive external training, mostly in a group of 10 to 15 people and after that they return to their market. That’s it.” (HR 2)*

So, there is a lack of expert knowledge and the line manager who indicated that she received training, did treat her employees, not in an intended way. This is not only a lack of expert knowledge but can also be related to a waste of time resources. Generally, there is no extra time granted to innovate or reflect upon one's job, but if an employee is gone for training he/she needs to be replaced with also costs money and time to reschedule.

#### 5.4.3.4 *Monetary resources*

Monetary resources are very scarce available to employees and innovations. Given the fact that the organization focuses on efficiency and a high cost-value ratio, there are no excess capacities that could be used to innovate and for example reimburse employees or pay them bonuses. The store under investigation recently had a facelift and it was debated over weeks if 15 of the 125 freezers are getting replaced and if 22000€ should be invested. In the end, based on the argument that they are so broken and disrupt the image of the store that they are getting replaced. This took a lot of effort to convince management and in the first place, they rejected the suggestion.

*“You cannot imagine what fight it was to get the new freezers at the cash-out area. It is not that they have no resources, it is just that in order to spend money on something they need to see the ultimate need for them and otherwise they do not spend a penny. It is not the problem that our CEO does not have enough money, but it is just the course of the organization.” (SM)*

Investments take a long time and need to go up the hierarchy before anything can be decided. Financial incentives or rewards are also not common practice. Employees receive their fixed salary and other bonuses are only paid to special occasions. This could be that an employee took part in a management initiated project and showed a good performance.

*“If there is someone with an outstanding performance, then there is the opportunity to speak with his/her supervisor and to, at maximum one monthly salary, reimburse this person. This can only happen twice a year. So this is regulated.” (HR 2)*

That means, there do theoretically exist extrinsic, monetary incentives, but that rarely happens and no interviewee received something like that.

This kind of resources is, like some others, very rarely available and need to be passed on a lot of different organizational actors to be decided upon. This is not only a barrier to innovation but overall decreases motivation to initially engage in IWB.

Concluding can be stated here, that material, cultural & capital resources are very scarce. Information is limited available where the employees' motivation to get these is even more limited. Expert knowledge is offered but there are guidelines missing that regulates how the make effective use of it. Some stores might make use of the new knowledge, but that cannot be checked. Whereas their team-orientation is a very well developed aspect and sets a good basis for innovation to occur, but given the fact that a lot of other aspects suggested by literature are missing indicates that culture and material resources are too limited to foster IWB. The LMX plays an important role here as well as in the moral & socio-organizational section because here it directly influences expert knowledge negatively as

well as the employees in the way that they do not motivate to pull information from the sources available. This also shows that role modeling is missing, which could function as a signal to employees. All results and influences are visualized in a revised model in Figure 4.

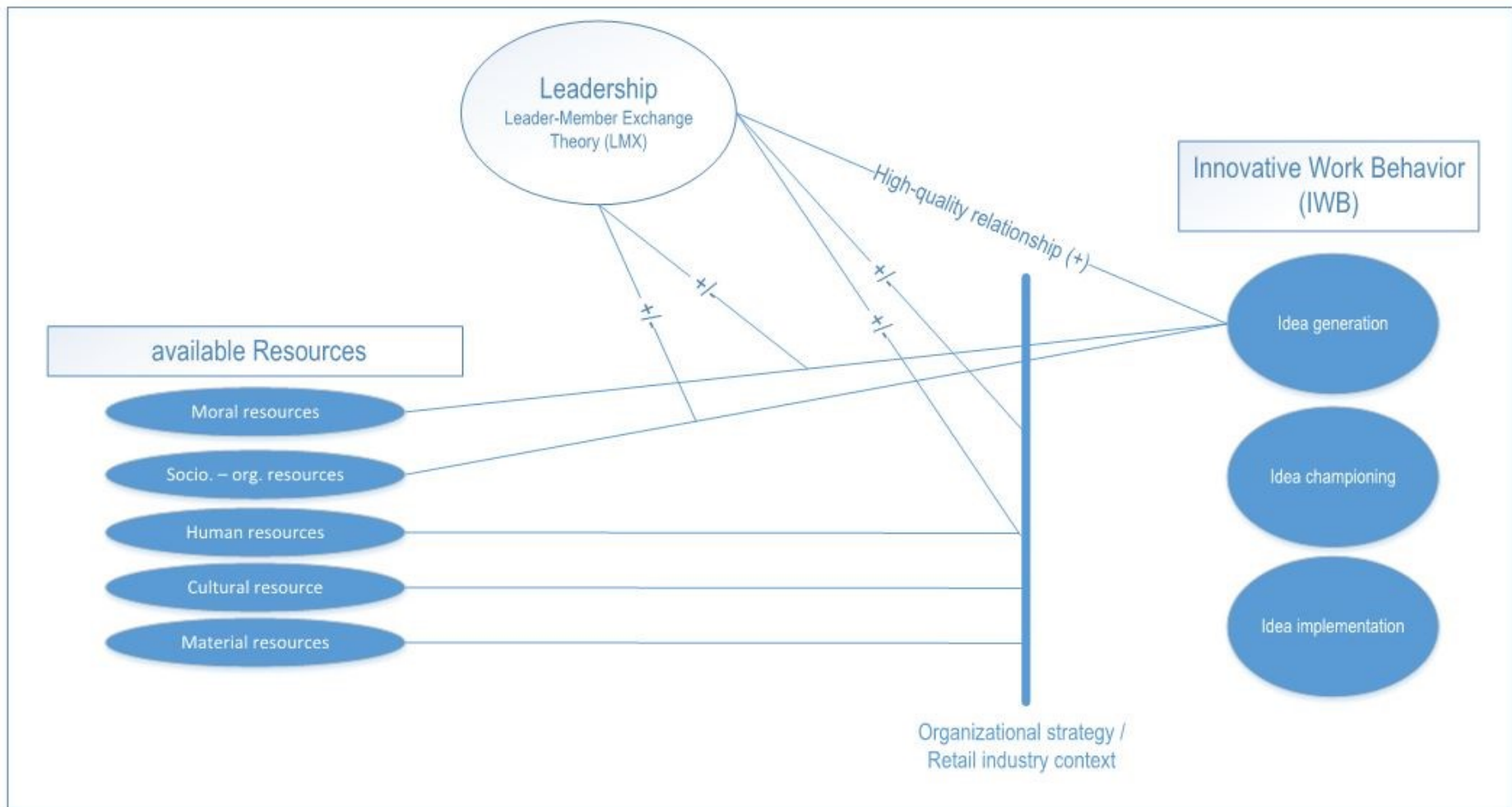


Figure 4. Revised model – Influence of Resource Access and LMX on IWB in the retail context



## 6 Discussion

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This case-study research provides an addition to the very limited knowledge about IWB in the retail industry by providing a framework that describes the enhancing and suppressing characteristics of resource access and the influence of LMX. The overall strategy and firm orientation towards efficiency and focus on well-established practices prohibit innovation and the related behavior in retail, which is in line with Bhaskaran (2006). Reynolds, Howard, Cuthbertson, and Hristov (2007) support this by stating that if you are innovatively oriented, you focus on premium offerings in your market and try not to make every process and work routine as easy as possible to make it cost effective. The hierarchical structure is characterized by centralization and employees on the shop floor should only perform their duties, which finds support in the literature suggesting that this often leads to less innovative behavior of firms (Rubalcaba, Michel, Sundbo, Brown, & Reynoso, 2012). By this, the initiation for innovative tasks solely comes from the management and is more the traditional top-down principle. The strategy and organizational values do not consist of innovative aspects and employee-driven innovation is not possible. A lot of ideas stays with the employees, because no feasible channels are facilitated and the relationship with some leaders lacks trust. Also, the high time pressure, does not enables employees to perform tasks besides their job description. So, the overall organizational strategy and industry sector can be described as a barrier to innovation, before we move on to LMX and Resource Access.

To begin with the essential human resources as an aspect that underlines the lacking innovativeness. In the hiring process no focus is placed on specific knowledge, skills, and abilities. Song, Almeida, and Wu (2003) stress that the acquisition of expert knowledge or innovation capabilities is embedded in individuals and that specific hiring (Mumford, 2000) is a way to acquire this knowledge. This points towards a lack of selection and hiring for innovation, also due to the very underdeveloped retail industry and the lack of education and skilled personnel. This means humans or employees do not function as a resource for innovation. Whereas a positive insight is provided by social support and trust among employees. This factor is extremely high and they do support each other in their ideas and work routines. This is according to Ashforth (1989); Doherty and Alexander (2004); Janssen (2005), who argue that social exchange is extremely important for the idea development and championing phase. This is also a strong point where the LMX and RMT overlap. The interaction of employees and social support is central to the LMX theory as well as to the moral and socio- organizational resources from the RMT. Whereas due to a lot of other restraining aspects, this social support not very often is about ideas, but about

daily topics. The social support employees exchange is also highly influenced by leadership because if the trust between leader and employee is not present and they have a low-quality relationship, employees feel insecure and do not behave innovatively, which is supported by the findings of Graen and Scandura (1987); Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). This is also a central aspect for employees to obtain resources from their leader, so if this relationship is not intact, it is extremely hard for employees to obtain resources from their superior. This means LMX and RMT do not only overlap but in this case, LMX can also be seen as an antecedent for Resource Access. For both scenarios evidence was found in this study and shows the effect of leadership and that social support do exist if there exists a good relationship. Employees indicated that they perceive their leader as not open to ideas and this restricts them to generate ideas and champion them. Another aspect here concerning the social culture is that employees who weren't delegated tasks felt frustrated and lost motivation to behave innovatively, which is an important antecedent stressed by De Jong and Den Hartog (2007); Yukl (2002).

Regarding the access to information resources, as Ong et al. (2003); Rindova et al. (2011) see the access to information and knowledge but also organizational values and strategy as stimulating IWB, this is a non-existent resource. Hence, in the retail industry, this is not the case due to lack of information sources but also a lack of personnel motivation. The quality of LMX influences this access tremendously as they act as a filter of information and only provide that information, they perceive as needed. This hinders innovation, due to limited conversation and information provided, against the findings of De Jong and Den Hartog (2007). Still, there is a lot of exchange between the colleagues. This is a very important aspect to come up with ideas and to learn from experiences of colleagues (Arrow, 1974; Kogut & Zander, 1992; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). As another interesting finding connected to information is that external knowledge exchange is nearly not happening and not possible. Some well-connected line managers did an exchange with colleagues from other markets, but neither did they have contact with a lot of people outside the organization and if, then it is more a sales conversation, which does not support the findings of Oerlemans et al. (1998). So, employees are somewhat isolated from additional organizational information than those they receive for their job. Other external sources are no option for most employees and so no additional information can be obtained. In other industries networks exist where employees can exchange with colleagues from the same branch and exchange knowledge and experience what helps social support, their career and idea exchange (Rajagopal, Joosten-ten Brinke, Van Bruggen, & Sloep, 2011). Information and knowledge exchange between employees occurs frequently and the basis for innovation is present (Leonard & Sensiper, 1998). Another negative aspect and representative for their lacking focus in knowledge acquisition is the fact that some line

manager receive training to better supervise and manage their employees and the organization fails to implement this knowledge by not changing their routines nor having debriefing or knowledge sharing sessions. No guidelines exist that facilitate the internalization of achieved knowledge and thereby, especially transformational leader capabilities cannot be developed to the full extent.

Another great barrier to innovation is the high time pressure the employee's experience, they often have a high workload that needs to be handled in their work hours, where there is no time for extra activities. Bain, Mann, and Pirola-Merlo (2001); Galbraith (1982) see time resources as a determining factor for innovation to occur, whereas throughout several hierarchical layers respondents indicated that they perceive time pressure as one of the most suppressing factors to behave innovatively. This reversely increases their physiological and psychological stress as (Wetzels et al., 2000) and as a consequence underperform (Behrman & Perreault Jr, 1984; Jackson & Schuler, 1985).

This clearly shows the great impact leadership has on the access to diverse organizational resources. Often resources do exist as a good social culture, strategic information, team-based working but that a lack of leadership, as it can be found in the retail industry, makes the innovative behavior a rare phenomenon. Tough, the leader behavior has to be looked at while considering the overall strategy. If the organization's strategy does not focus on innovation at all and does not emphasize EDI or IWB, the leader will not show an open attitude towards employee's ideas by default. The basis here is the retail industry and the need for economies of scale to make it a profitable business. Cost reduction and efficient working is the main objective and does influence leaders and their actions towards the distribution of resources and ideas. Furthermore, this study reveals the fact that even though the organization aims for an overall team-oriented culture, the culture between divisions in a store are independent and employees tend to focus on their department only, what depends on leadership. Another example to point this out, the organization has defined in their overall guidelines for employees and line managers, that they should emphasize a team culture and facilitate open communication and critics, but the responsibility to implement and realize these practices lie with the line or store manager and they have a lot of autonomy. Relations to other departments rarely exist and the team-orientation is not interdependently applied. So, if the leader has another leadership philosophy, employees are often exposed to this and these are often old management practices of control and less autonomy.

Idea generation is with some exceptions not happening and if, mostly incremental and only minor changes and ideas are generated. This happens during their regular work hours and they do it intrinsically motivated to make their job as easy as possible, but previously

described most employees do not possess intrinsic motivation.

Idea championing whatsoever is only apparent between line manager and employee and is decided upon here in an easy fashion. Championing does not involve connecting with different organizational actors or gathering a team of people that could support the idea. It happens in a different manner than the literature suggests and thus is not evident based on the presented literature. Everything happens on an informal basis. Therefore, the relationship is here especially important to not lose the idea employees have in mind. Implementation is rather accepting ideas in a spontaneous manner, e.g. different placement of product to make it more attractive. IWB, as described in the literature, cannot be found in this retail organization. The ideation management is only existing pro forma and is not recognized by employees. So, a lot of IWB is prohibited because of lacking leadership qualities and low-level relationships. Resources are granted only very limited and some do not exist at all.

By this, it can be concluded that IWB is the result of a lot of the organizational factors like industry, strategy, management philosophies and resource availability. Coming back to the research question it can be said IWB is highly depended on the resource access and also subject to the influence of leader-member exchange relationships. LMX influences to what extent employees have opportunities to use resources and facilitates the employee's motivation to innovate and use them. You cannot name single resources that employees need to engage, it is the mixture of resources that makes employees able to behave innovatively. But also, the effect of resources on IWB is influenced by LMX, because the opportunity and motivation to use these stems from the quality of their relationship. This had a big moderating effect and determined how strong the linkage is between available resources and IWB.

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Influence of LMX on Resources</b>	<b>Idea generation</b>	<b>Idea championing</b>	<b>Idea implementation</b>
<b>Human resources</b>	<i>Not to determine</i> if interviewee makes a good first impression on the leader, this can be the start of a high-quality relationship	<i>No influence</i> - No specific job requirements for shop floor - No KSA's for innovation or creativity	<i>Not to determine</i>	<i>Not to determine</i>
<b>Moral resources</b>	<i>Negative/ positive</i> Some facilitated a high-quality relationship with their employees (good social support & trust), some have a low-quality relationship with employees	<i>High influence</i> - High-quality: Often ideas are exchanged with supervisor - Low-quality: No ideas are generated, motivation lost	<i>Moderate to high influence</i> High- quality: - Some ideas are "championed" to supervisor and taken into consideration Low-quality: - No ideas are brought forward	<i>Not to determine</i>
<b>Cultural resources</b>	<i>Mostly negative</i> - Very limited access to additional information granted - Time pressure put on employees can be very high	<i>No influence</i> No ideas can be generated that go beyond their daily tasks, only very incremental ideas emerge	<i>Not to determine</i>	<i>Not to determine</i>

<b>Socio-org. resources</b>	<i>Positive/negative</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Most departments have a strong linkage and communicate with each other</li> <li>- “external” exchange with other stores</li> <li>- Lot of tacit knowledge exchange</li> </ul>	<i>Moderate influence</i> Employees develop ideas that are mostly incremental and only address issues like market layout or shelving of products	<i>Moderate to low influence</i> Incremental ideas are discussed with colleagues	<i>Not to determine</i>
<b>Material resources</b>	<i>Negative</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Money is not easily available from managers</li> <li>- Extra information is hard to access</li> <li>- No property where innovations can be discussed</li> </ul>	<i>Not to determine</i>	<i>Not to determine</i>	<i>Not to determine</i>

Figure 5. Influence of LMX and RMT on IWB

## Implications: IWB in retailing

In this section, the implications this research has for line managers and employees in the retail industry as well as for the existing literature. All implications will be based on the analysis of the interview and documents retrieved from the organization.

### Theoretical implications

First, this research adds the retail industry in the context of IWB to the existing literature. A lot of research has been conducted in the manufacturing industry, whereas the service sector, in general, is relatively unexplored. This research showed that the retail industry has a lot of different characteristics and cannot simply be compared. The leadership is important for IWB because it could clearly be distinguished how employees behaved according to their relationship with their leader and if they got motivated or not. Furthermore, the relation between available resources and employees' opportunities to use them was influenced by the LMX. Therefore, it is important as an independent but also as a moderator variable. Fully dependent on LMX and the rarely available resources, IWB could not be observed and only very few employees generated ideas.

Thus, if there was a high-quality LMX which normally enhances resource access, IWB was still not possible due to the overall organizational context and missing resources, what emphasizes the difference of the retail industry. So even if ideas were generated, they could not be further developed. Moreover, indications have been found that the hierarchical structure in retail does prohibit idea championing and implementation because a lot of ideas remain with the employees and are not communicated. As in the literature, there are a lot of innovative organizations with flatter hierarchies. Furthermore, the RMT comes from the scientific field of political research and has not been tested in business administration studies, yet. Still, all the resources could be applied to this field of research. Here the study also contributes that not only resources can make innovation possible, but besides organizational factors also more individual factors, like line managers, need to be considered. LMX is very interesting in this setting, because a lot of exchange happens, but is often not connected to obtaining more resources or receiving more responsibilities in retail.

## Practical implications

This case study has several implications for line managers in the retail industry who desire to increase the innovation performance and innovative work behavior of their employees. The first challenge will be to cope with challenges concerning the overall firm strategy and the generally low level of education across the whole industry. This results in, as found, a relatively low level of motivation to acquire resources or to cope with the daily workload. Given the extensive hierarchical structure, there needs to be a change at the top-level to find a way to handle innovations besides their efficiency agenda. Flatter hierarchies would ease up the idea management. Still, this will be a very difficult agenda, as the channels to communicate ideas to management needs to be simplified and easily accessible for employees (idea championing). The opportunity to hand in an idea needs to be easier and therefore more feasible for employees, also for those that do not have a profound knowledge of a computer what is often the case with older retail employees.

The next step would be to work on the access to resources and even start to develop some missing ones. There are a lot of resource capacities available but are not used to their full extent, yet. Information needs to be distributed more frequently also to shop floor employees and it needs to be ensured that employees are delegated tasks with responsibility to generate own ideas. Human resources, in general, need to get some emphasis by line managers in retail, as new employees need to be picked according to a few set of characteristics. If for example only those are hired who have already worked before in the retail industry you can ensure that these people know the business and have external knowledge that they will bring into the firm, which will be enhancing IWB. Having too much-unskilled worker decreases the capacities the organization has.

The idea of a team culture is already a good direction, where a lot of exchange happens between employees and if this could be enriched with “fresh” knowledge it would already be a big step towards more idea generation. Furthermore, line managers need to facilitates a team culture that values a two-way communication and is open to critics and ideas. Upper management has to monitor if this is achieved and get to know the general tone of departments. This is the antecedent of an innovation culture in a team. Employees need to feel safe to raise ideas and address their supervisors.

Especially because time pressure is an everlasting problem, they should be interested in facilitating a culture that reduces stress



## Limitations & Future Research

By integrating literature from different fields of research and conducting research in a low researched industry, this study provided several limitations and implications for IWB in the retail industry. For the literature, the databases of Web of Science, Scopus and Google scholar have been used. These might oversee other articles and narrow the literature to only peer-reviewed articles. Another limitation that needs to be acknowledged is that gathering and analyzing data based on in-depth interviews with employees and document analysis is relatively subjective compared to quantitative data sampling and can be influenced by an experimenter bias (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007), where I asked another researcher from the knowledge field of HRM to check my coding and read my analysis with respect to the sampled data. This prohibits the analysis to be influenced from pre-determined, personal perceptions. Furthermore, needs to be noted that the employees from this specific retail organization are unique in retail and cannot easily be generalized for the whole industry. The size of this organization might play an important role here because, in contrast to smaller organizations, they might be more standardized and restricted to policies. Here, further research is needed to determine how it might be possible to overcome standardization and formalization obstacles to be able to communicate ideas easily as well as to confirm the generalizability of this study. A good addition to this research would have been to compare the findings from the specific store with another one, to see whether this store is representative for other stores or not. This was in the time-frame of my placement and the associated resources at my disposal not possible, but can be recommended for further research. As the development of the research framework, especially the combination of RMT and LMX, lacks previous studies and needs further research in other industries or organizations from retail. More studies are needed to look at LMX and the development of leadership qualities in retail. Here, more reasons need to be outlined why there is a broad quality range of leader-member relationships and why some employees have greater intrinsic motivation than others while working under similar conditions. The RMT theory needs to be tested in various kinds of organizational fields and needs adjustment to different industry settings. It would have been a good addition to study other retail chains and look if all the limitations match with those, too in order to make a statement regarding the whole industry. Further, would it be interesting to look at top management in the retail organizations and if the work and Resource Access differs there and if IWB is possible.

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## 8 Appendix

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### 8.1 Interview Template Shop Floor Employee

- 1 Was sind Deine Aufgaben bei Kaufland?
- 2 Wie lange arbeitest du bereits bei Kaufland und seit wann in diesem Bereich?
- 3 Hast du Ideen für Innovationen, die existierende Arbeitsabläufe verbessern?
- 4 Warum schaust du nach neuen Ideen?
- 5 Was für Ideen für neue Arbeitsabläufe die bisher nicht zur Routine gelten, hattest du bisher?
- 6 Hältst du Ausschau nach aktuellen Trends, die z.B. das lagern oder gestalten der Ware im Markt verändert, Arbeitsabläufe oder Zufriedenheit der Mitarbeiter?
- 7 Inwiefern hast du Angst, dass eine vorgebrachte Idee dein Ansehen beim Vorgesetzten schaden könnte?
- 8 Hast du schon mal eine Idee zu deinem Vorgesetzten getragen?
- 9 Wie war der Zugang zu Ressourcen diese weiterzuentwickeln (Zeit, Hilfe zur Umsetzung, Vernetzung mit anderen relevanten Parteien)?
- 10 Inwiefern ermutigt euer Vorgesetzter euch, Ideen zu entwickeln und diese zu kommunizieren?
- 11 Wenn eine Idee existiert, versuchst du andere Mitarbeiter davon zu überzeugen?
- 12 Inwieweit versuchst du Ressourcen zu mobilisieren, wie zum Beispiel andere Mitarbeiter die diese Idee unterstützen und wie?
- 13 Integrierst du neue Ideen in der täglichen Routine?
- 14 Veränderst du Ideen so, dass sie besser zu den täglichen Abläufen und der Unternehmenskultur passen?
- 15 Hast du jetzt aktuell Ideen, die eure täglichen Abläufe verbessern könnten? Wenn ja, beschreibe sie doch bitte kurz.
- 16 Wie beschreibst du das Verhältnis zu deinem direkten Vorgesetzten?
- 17 Inwiefern wird von euch erwartet, dass ihr euch kritisch mit Abläufen auseinandersetzt?
- 18 Was für Möglichkeiten gibt es bei Kaufland, neue Ideen zu kommunizieren?
- 19 Inwieweit werdet ihr von Vorgesetzten belohnt und erhältet Anerkennung für neue Ideen?
- 20 Wie kommuniziert dein Vorgesetzter Erwartungen hinsichtlich Ideen und Innovationen?
- 21 Was für Risiken nimmst du in Kauf für neue Ideen, die z.B. dein Ansehen oder Leistungsempfinden von Vorgesetzten beeinträchtigen könnten?

- 22 Wie ist das Verhältnis zu deinen Kollegen? Unterstützt und ermutigt ihr euch gegenseitig bei Stress im Job?
- 23 Inwieweit weißt du über die Strategie und Leitlinien von Kaufland Bescheid? Erhaltet ihr solche Informationen?
- 24 Inwieweit nutzt ihr das Intranet um euch auf dem Laufenden zu halten bzw. habt ihr Zugriff auf Datenbanken um euch über Themen zur Problemlösung zu informieren?
- 25 Beschreibe doch bitte die Kultur hier bei Kaufland (Umgang mit Mitarbeitern, Freiheit in Gestaltung der Arbeit, Vertrauen).
- 26 Inwiefern tauschst du dich mit deinen Mitarbeitern aus, wenn es darum geht Wissen zu erlangen was nirgends geschrieben steht?
- 27 Inwiefern hast du die Möglichkeit und tauschst dich mit externen Parteien (Lieferanten, Kunden, etc.) über Dinge aus?
- 28 Kann ich dich später kontaktieren, sofern ich noch weitere Fragen habe?

## 8.2 Interview Template Store manager/Line managers

- 1 Was sind Deine Aufgaben bei Kaufland?
- 2 Wie lange arbeitest du bereits bei Kaufland und seit wann in diesem Bereich als Abteilungsleitung?
- 3 Hast du Ideen für Innovationen, die existierende Arbeitsabläufe verbessern?
- 3.1 Warum schaust du nach neuen Ideen?
- 4 Was für Ideen könnten täglichen Arbeitsabläufe verändern? Was könnte die tägliche Routine unterbrechen?
- 5 Hältst du Ausschau nach aktuellen Trends, die z.B. das lagern oder gestalten der Ware im Markt verändert?
- 6 In wie weit beeinflussen dich diese Trends um Sachen zu verändern?
- 6.1 Was ist mit dieser Idee passiert, wurde sie weiterverfolgt?
- 7 Inwieweit, hast du schon neue Ideen in der täglichen Routine integriert?
- 8 Veränderst du Ideen so, dass sie besser zu den täglichen Abläufen und der Unternehmenskultur passen?
- 9 Hast du jetzt aktuell Ideen, die eure täglichen Abläufe verbessern könnten? Wenn ja, beschreibe sie doch bitte kurz.
- 10 Wenn eine Idee existiert, versuchst du andere Mitarbeiter davon zu überzeugen?
- 11 Wie würdest du das Verhältnis zu deinen Mitarbeitern beschreiben?
- 12 Inwiefern gehst du mit einem guten Beispiel voran und veränderst Prozesse?

- 13 Was für Risiken nimmst du in Kauf für neue Ideen, die z.B. dein Ansehen oder Leistungsempfinden von deinem Vorgesetzten beeinträchtigen könnten?
- 14 Inwiefern ermutigt dein Vorgesetzter dich, Ideen zu entwickeln und diese zu kommunizieren?
- 15 Inwieweit denkst du, dass sie in der Lage wären und Lust hätten sich innovativer zu verhalten?
- 16 Inwieweit gibst du deinen Mitarbeitern Feedback zu Ihrer Leistung und besprecht ihr gemeinsam Ziele und wie ihr sie erreichen könnt?
- 17 Inwiefern gibst du auch verantwortungsvolle Aufgaben an deine Mitarbeiter ab und unterstützt sie dabei?
- 18 Inwieweit können deine Mitarbeiter zu dir kommen und dich bzgl. Neuen Ideen ansprechen?
- 19 Inwieweit belohnst du Verbesserungsansätze und gibst den Mitarbeitern Anerkennung?
- 20 Was für Möglichkeiten und Ressourcen kannst du/bietest du deinen Mitarbeitern an, Ideen zu entwickeln? Was sind das für Ressourcen?
- 21 Inwiefern denkst du, dass Ideen und Verbesserungen eure Leistung und Arbeitsabläufe positiv beeinflussen können?
- 22 Inwieweit weißt du über die aktuelle Strategie und Leitlinien von Kaufland Bescheid? Erhaltet ihr solche Informationen?
- 23 Inwieweit nutzt ihr das Intranet um euch auf dem Laufenden zu halten bzw. habt ihr Zugriff auf Datenbanken um euch über Themen zur Problemlösung zu informieren?
- 24 Beschreibe doch bitte die Kultur hier bei Kaufland (Umgang mit Mitarbeitern, Freiheit in Gestaltung der Arbeit, Vertrauen).
- 25 Inwiefern tauschst du dich mit deinen Mitarbeitern aus, wenn es darum geht Wissen zu erlangen was nirgends geschrieben steht?
- 26 Inwiefern hast du die Möglichkeit und tauschst dich mit externen Parteien (Lieferanten, Kunden, etc.) über Dinge aus?
- 27 Inwieweit tauscht du dich mit anderen Hausleitern oder Leitern anderer Marktketten aus? Gibt es die Möglichkeit für sowas?
- 28 Kann ich dich später kontaktieren, sofern ich noch weitere Fragen habe?

## 8.3 Atlas.ti Output (example)

The screenshot displays the Atlas.ti software interface. The main window shows a document titled 'D3: I3\_Heidi Seidler (30)' with a transcript of a meeting. The transcript includes dialogue between Heidi and an unnamed person (Ich). The transcript is as follows:

Heidi: Also bei vielen Sachen habe ich das schon gemacht. Obwohl sie bei vielen Sachen jetzt gerade wieder gegensteuern, das ist ja schon, wenn du sagst, alles in Karton, je nachdem was das ist, wenn ich nur gegen 5 rote Pappen gucke, weiß der Geier was da drin ist. Zumal wir hier, wir sind ja hier in einem schlechten Einzugsgebiet, die können wirklich nicht alle lesen, auch die ganzen ausländischen Mitarbeiter und Mitmenschen die wir hier haben, das ist ja nichtmal böse gemeint, aber die Verstehen das nicht. Wenn du jetzt da oben fünf blaue und fünf rote Karton hast, da kann alles drin sein. Da kann alles drin sein, ich denke immer, es ist ansprechender wenn mich Artikel angucken, wenn ich Äpfel sehe, die schön aufgebaut sind, wenn ich irgendwelche Salate sehe, wo ich sehen kann was da drin ist, als wenn ich gegen irgendwelche Pappen gucke.

Ich: Aber das geht eben dann nicht, weil es andere Vorschriften gibt?

Heidi: Ja, genau.

Ich: Okay. Hast du denn auch schon Ideen erfolgreich in eurer Routine integriert?

Heidi: Ich habe schon viel solcher Sachen bei Artikeln gemacht, obwohl sie am Anfang dagegen gesteuert haben, damals schon, dann habe ich aber gesagt, die Umsätze sind gestiegen, die Zahlen sind in Ordnung, es ist eine Mehrarbeit, das muss man schon sagen, aber den wir damals als VKL hatten, der hatte meine Größe, da habe ich gesagt „jetzt sagen sie mir von hier unten, da sind vier Sorten drin, wer soll das ohne auf die Theke zu steigen, oder als ältere Dame oder so, sehen, welche Sorte da drin ist?“ Ich gucke gegen eine weiße Papppe, das weiß kein Mensch, dann habe ich die gedreht, sichtbar nach vorne gestellt, das konnte ich dann auch belegen anhand der Verkaufszahlen, wir können ja alles sehen in unserem System...

Ich: Super, also war das schon erfolgreich. Wenn du eine Idee hast, überzeugst du dann auch gerne deine Mitarbeiter im Team davon? Das du auch voran gehst? Leute befasst euch doch auch mal gerne damit.

Heidi: Ja, absolut. Ich frage die Mitarbeiter ja dann auch, man hat ja nicht immer, ich bin ja nicht der Maßgebende Pol dort, manchmal hat ja auch ein anderer eine tolle Idee. Die kramen da zuhause, dann sagen die auch schonmal, wir könnten das ja lieber anders platzieren. Man muss mit den Leuten ja auch schonmal sprechen. Es ist ja nicht gesetzt was die Frau Seidler da vor Ort sagt.

Ich: Ja, genau, du bistest.

Heidi: Wenn ich schon mal sage guck mal, oder was meinst du sollen wir lieber so oder was hältst du hier von? Also das tun wir schon, das finde ich wichtig, dass soll nicht alles so sein wie ich das will oder wie ich das mache, wir sollen ja mitdenken oder mitüberlegen warum irgendwas so ist und sich gut oder schlechter verkauft.

Ich: Ja. Wenn du jetzt was hast was auch noch ein Vorgesetzter absegnen muss, das du absprechen musst.

Heidi: Also das mache ich wohl, ich spreche und frage natürlich auch viel hier. Einfach alles so machen, das tust du dann auch nicht, weil du hast ja dann auch keine Lust alles ständig durch den Mist gefahren zu kriegen. Ich sage dann oft, so und so, frage ob ich darf und wer der Chef dann sagt ja, dann mache ich.

Ich: Okay.

Heidi: Du kannst ja nicht gegen das System arbeiten, das wäre ja schon fehl am Platz.

Ich: Nein, das stimmt. So sollte es nicht sein. Also du gehst auch schonmal voran und zeigst deinen Leuten, hier man kann was machen. Du kannst damit auch mal zu deinem Vorgesetzten zu gehen. Bist also bereit auch mal Risiken einzugehen, z.B. auch mal einfach zu riskieren das die Idee nicht auf Begeisterung stößt.

Heidi: Ja, klar, man muss ja auch mal testen. Manchmal sagst du, okay, wir probieren das mal aus und wenn das nicht läuft, dann räume ich das wieder um und das tut mir für andere Sachen zu weh, dann krame ich das wieder um. Von rechts nach links, dann muss man die Arbeit mal eben machen, das ist so. Anders arbeiten die großen Leute ja auch nicht.

Ich: Ja, das ist gerade eben auch interessant, weil du sagtest du hättest mal mit dem VKL gesprochen, gehst also das Risiko ein zum Beispiel dein Ansehen in der Arbeit beeinträchtigen könnten, wenn man an den falschen gerät. Also bist du bereits sowas einzugehen?

The left sidebar shows a list of codes (96) with their frequencies. The right sidebar shows a list of codes (96) with their frequencies. The bottom of the window shows a search bar and a list of codes.